

JAPANESE HOLIDAY PICTURE TALES



CHIYONO SUGIMOTO





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THE SEVEN GODS OF HAPPINESS SAILING ON THE TREASURE BOAT.

JAPANESE HOLIDAY PICTURE TALES

by

CHIYONO SUGIMOTO

Kiyooka

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CHILDRENS ROOM
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COPY

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JAN 12 1934
GIFT
WILLIAM L. BROWN

To
MY "AUNTIE"

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JAPANESE HOLIDAY PICTURE TALES

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JANUARY

"Here is New Year. Congratulation, honorable young mistress!" said my kind old nurse. Right behind her Kimi, the maid, was bowing too.

"Same to you," I said in response to their earnest greetings as I hurried into my very best kimono. It was still very early in the morning.

"Here is your new foot-mitten," said my nurse, who never forgot to hand me something new to start the New Year. "Your honorable Grandmother is already dressed and is seated before the New Year's table, waiting for honorable all."

With Kimi's help, my lovely new sash was finally tied. I felt very happy to wear my most formal, five-crested kimono, for was it not the New Year's day when everyone wore his very best? I slid the paper doors open and looked out from my upstairs window. Every gate in sight

had already a flag of the Rising Sun fluttering between the New Year decorations of pine and bamboo.

"All these lucky symbols," I thought to myself as I went downstairs, "will have to bring happiness."

While all our family were seated around the breakfast table, each servant came in to bow their greetings. Then we, in return, wished them a hearty happy New Year. Just as we finished our breakfast and laid down our chopsticks, we heard the lively drum-beats of the Lion Boys.

These minstrels never failed to appear around our neighborhood once a year, and their vigorous music would be heard long before the lion appeared at our door. They were two boys; one carried a pair of drums, and the other was wearing a long green mantle with a huge red and gold mask of a lion on his shoulders.

When our household gathered at the entrance, the lion began to dance while the drummer quickened his beat: *Ten—ten—ton—ton, ten—ton—ton.*

My little cousin happened to drop in just then,

and the lion pretended to devour his little head in its huge jaws. My little cousin was not afraid at all, and laughed when he was released.

"Brave boy! Young master," said the lion, "the bite I gave you will make you strong." And till this day he is the strongest of all my cousins.

Our old nurse gave the minstrels some coins, and they made many bows as they moved on to the next door.

Soon the guests began to come, and our home was full of cheer. Some of them fell to playing poem cards; others of more vigorous nature went out to the garden with the battledores and shuttles. Soon it was lunch-time—then dinner-time. How quickly the night came, and before we realized it, it was almost time for bed. I went into honored Grandmother's room to wish "peaceful rest," when, just as I sat down in her quiet room, we heard the call of "*Otakara! Otakara!*" out in the street. Honored Grandmother clapped her hands, and Kimi came to the threshold.

"There is the good-luck man calling out his '*otakara.*' Get one sheet for Chiyo," she said, handing her some coins.

In a little while Kimi was back with a piece of paper with the drawing of the Seven Gods of Happiness sailing on the Treasure Boat.

"Put this under your pillow, my little granddaughter, and dream a good dream that will tell you the way of happiness," she said.

I thanked her with happy expectations. I looked at the drawing again, and my eyes fell on the fat-cheeked, laughing god standing in the center, carrying a big bag over his shoulder and a good-luck mallet in his hand.

"Honorable Grandmother, is this not Daikoku, the god of happiness?"

Grandmother nodded her head slowly.

"Yes, Chiyo. And there is a nice story about him which will be most appropriate for the first story-telling of the New Year."

So this following story is the very one my dear honorable Grandmother told me on that evening many years ago.



"BRAVE BOY! YOUNG MASTER," SAID THE LION, "THE BITE I GAVE
YOU WILL MAKE YOU STRONG."

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THE RABBIT AND THE GOD OF HAPPINESS

Once upon a time, on the island of Inaba, lived a snowy white rabbit. Though he always lived there, he had the strongest wish to go across the water to the big mainland. Day in and day out he skipped up and down the sandy shore and wondered how he could go across that gleaming water.

It happened, one afternoon, as the snowy white rabbit was stretching himself on the hot sand, he saw a big alligator.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the rabbit to himself. "This thing ought to take me across. But he'll never do it for me. I will have to think up a scheme."

So, as the slant-eyed alligator came his way, the rabbit said, "Good day to you, Master Alligator. How are you on this sunny afternoon?"

"Fine!" said the big long alligator. "As well as I can expect to be."

"But," said the rabbit, "it must be very lonely indeed for you. As for me, I have many relatives on this island to keep me company, but you are always floating all by your elegant self."

"I, lonely?" said the proud alligator. "Not I! I have relatives all over the oceans, and you have only the island to your credit."

"Ha! Ha!" thought the cunning rabbit. "I have him!" But he only said, "I am sure, though, at present you have not enough relatives to line up like a bridge across this water, all the way to the mainland."

"I have, too!" said the indignant alligator.

"Truly? That is fine!" said the rabbit in pretended great awe. "How wonderful it would be to see so many of you handsome alligators lined up all the way to the mainland!"

"I will do that right now," said the pleased alligator. "Wait a little while and I will bring my honorable uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces."

It was not long that the snowy white rabbit waited beneath the shadows of the pine tree. Soon groups of wiggling humpy backs of the

alligators were seen on the horizon and before the rabbit quite realized it, they were lined up all the way to the mainland, each alligator holding firmly with his teeth to the tail of the one ahead.

The rabbit was overjoyed, but he only said, "*Sa!* I will begin counting. One, two, three, four, five." And on and on he skipped on top of the alligators' backs. Finally, as he was about to land on the last alligator, he shouted, "One hundred!" in gleeful triumph. "Ha! Ha! Ha! You foolish Master Alligators, it was to get to this mainland I bid you come. Thank you extremely for your trouble!"

"Not so fast!" said the fiercest alligator at the end, opening his huge mouth with sharp teeth. "For that, you will have this!"

And before the poor rabbit could put his last foot on shore, his whole snowy fur was all pulled off. Then the alligators swam off in different directions, looking very indignant.

"Ah! Ah!" cried the poor rabbit. "How painful I feel! How painful I feel!" He was standing on the shore of the mainland where he had

long wished to come, but now he was not happy at all.

Just then a group of gods passed by, dressed in their very best white, and wearing gay colored jewels around their necks. One of the gods spoke to the rabbit.

“What is the matter, my poor fellow?” he said.

“Most honored sirs, the alligators have pulled off all my pretty fur, as you see,” said the poor rabbit, and he told them of all that had happened.

Then another god spoke in a mischievous tone: “I will tell you the best way to cure yourself. Go immediately to the salty ocean and bathe yourself well. Then come back and take a long sun-bath. Very soon all your pretty fur will come back.”

The rabbit thanked the gods with grateful heart and went immediately to the salty ocean and bathed himself as he was told. But when he came back to sit in the sun, he felt even more pain than before. The poor rabbit began to sob. Now and then he rolled on the ground, thinking he might feel better. But he was very miserable. Just then another god, with a big bag over his

shoulder, came by. The god, seeing the rabbit, came straight up to him.

"My poor fellow," he said kindly, "what has happened to make you so miserable?"

At first the rabbit only sobbed and he would not tell. The other gods gave him wrong advice and he was afraid. But this god said again, still kindlier, "Do not be afraid of me. I am Daikoku. I will make you well."

So the rabbit told him how he schemed and came to this mainland, and how the alligators pulled all his pretty fur off, and how the other gods told him to go to the salty ocean and bathe.

"You should not have made such a scheme in the first place," said Daikoku. To this reproach, the rabbit nodded with all earnestness. "And wicked and unkind it was of my honorable brothers to advise such wrong treatment," continued Daikoku. "However, we must hurry and make your pretty fur come back again."

"Were they your elder brothers?" asked the poor rabbit. The god Daikoku nodded, and said, "I am only the youngest of the brothers, and I am humbly carrying the baggage for them.

Now, go immediately to the lake and wash off all the salt, then take many handfuls of blossoms of Kaba, of which you will find plenty on the lake shore. These you lay on the dry ground, and on them roll yourself. Before you know it, you will have pretty snowy fur again."

"I thank you most deeply," said the rabbit, and right away he went to the lake as he was told. Then he spread the blossoms of Kaba on the ground like a mattress and rolled himself on them. Lo! Not long after, he found himself all furred in the prettiest of snowy whiteness. The pretty rabbit danced with joy, and went skipping back to where the god Daikoku was waiting.

"Most grateful I be!" cried the happy rabbit. "I feel better and happier than before. For this kindness, I am sure, your honored self will find the best of happiness awaiting you," went on the rabbit. "May I be so bold as to ask whither you are bound?"

"I am an attendant to my honorable brothers, who are on their way to the country of Izumo. There a beautiful princess is awaiting to be a bride to one of them. Unfortunately, all my



AND RIGHT AWAY HE WENT TO THE LAKE AS HE WAS TOLD, AND
BATHED HIMSELF WELL IN THE CLEAR WATER.

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honorable brothers are anxious to be the bridegroom; I do not know what will be the outcome."

"That I know," cried the happy rabbit. "If you would let me predict, the Princess will surely choose you as the bridegroom, even if you are but an attendant. For the Wise always know the Noble as well as the Mean."

To this talk the god Daikoku only smiled. Then quickly bidding the rabbit "Till we meet again," he went on his way.

When the god Daikoku arrived in front of the Princess' home, he saw his elder brothers clustered together, talking very rapidly and with much excited voices.

"Here comes the slow-headed brother," said one of the elder brothers, looking at Daikoku. "What have you been doing?"

"Ah!" said the beautiful Princess, suddenly appearing from within, and coming forward to meet the god Daikoku. "It is to this kindly god I wish to give my hand," she said quietly.

The elder brothers looked at her in amazement. So did the god Daikoku.

"But he is only the youngest brother, our attendant," spoke up one.

"Yes, I know," said the Princess sweetly, with confidence.

And so Daikoku became the bridegroom, and lived happily ever after with the beautiful Princess. And as for the rabbit, he joined the happy couple and lived with them for a long time. But as for the alligators, no one knows to this day what really became of them.

Many years after, people decided to call Daikoku the god of happiness, because he was always the source of happiness to the people over whom he ruled.

Even to this day we see the figures of the god of happiness in many homes in Japan. It is a happy-faced god carrying a big bag over his shoulder and a good-luck mallet in his hand, and is usually standing on two bales of rice, blessing the household with cheer, so that nobody can frown or be unhappy when he looks up to his smiling face.

FEBRUARY

Cherry blossom is beautiful too, but there is something about the sturdy white plum blossom which has a special place in my heart. It does not bloom in profusion, so one could see it from afar. One must wander about the garden and find it.

There are several plum trees blooming in the courtyard of the temple. They stand unnoticed amidst the evergreen pines. What delicate fragrance the blossom has!

There it was that honored Grandmother and I used to stroll about in the sun before we entered the temple for the service. There were many pretty doves nestled in the shadow of the huge roof of the temple. A whole flock of them used to flutter down in the yard, and I would throw them tiny beans which Grandmother bought for me from a happy-faced old woman. This old woman always had the little paper bags filled with

beans for the doves in her tent store. However cold the day might be, there she would be, huddled close to the small fire-box, with her rough old hands over a bit of red charcoal fire. Then as Grandmother's elderly friends came in one by one through the temple gate, I finished feeding the doves and followed honorable Grandmother to the temple entrance.

How quiet was the temple within! And how beautiful too, with the afternoon sun flooding the wide polished veranda and the smooth straw matting. Before the dim shrine the huge gilded lotus leaves and the flower offerings glistened against the candle-lights, and the curling smoke of the incense wafted toward heavens passing silently by the calm face of the Buddha.

As we sat down on the matted floor, the chanting of the priest began, and Grandmother slowly bowed her head, rubbing her rosary between the palms of her withered graceful hands. I closed my eyes and listened to the melodious murmurs of the chants. "This," I thought, "must have



A WHOLE FLOCK OF THEM USED TO FLUTTER DOWN IN THE YARD
AND I WOULD THROW THEM TINY BEANS WHICH GRANDMOTHER
BOUGHT FOR ME FROM A HAPPY-FACED OLD WOMAN.

been like the gathering in the temple, when Ryochi found his mother.”

And so here I begin the story of Ryochi, the devoted priest,—a sad tale which my Grandmother used to tell me.

HOW RYOCHI FOUND HIS MOTHER

Once upon a time there was a peaceful farming village. Everybody was happy and contented, tilling the rice-fields and growing mulberries for the silkworms.

Suddenly one afternoon in early spring, when the plums were beginning to bloom, there was a shrill cry of a woman heard from the silent grove of pines, followed by gasps of "Ah——" and "Catastrophe! *Taihen!*"—exclamations of men's voices.

Dozens of people came running out of the pine grove into the open field. A woman was running and shrieking at the head of the crowd. Some men followed and then a few children tagged on behind.

"Stop! Wait!" cried a man, pointing toward the sky as he ran after the shrieking woman.

One farmer in the field looked up from his

rice-planting, and called out to the noisy crowd, "What is the matter?"

"Do you not see?" called out one of the running men, pointing toward the sky. "The eagle has taken her baby! The eagle has taken her baby boy!"

It was true! The huge bird, with speed of an arrow, was flying through the air. In its sharp claws it held a baby by the sash. Several men threw stones, aiming straight at the eagle as they ran after it. Others threw up their hoes with terrible threats. But the eagle only flew higher and higher toward the blue heavens, leaving the mother shrieking as she fell fainting to the ground. The men standing around her could only look toward the disappearing bird with helpless anger. They had no words to console her.

Twelve years passed, and the children who saw this sad incident were now young men and women. But still nothing was heard of the little boy baby who was carried away by the eagle. The poor mother, who had been waiting all these years for him, now gave up all hope of seeing him come back to her. So one day she decided to go

and find him. And if he no longer lived, she was determined to know something about him.

The neighbors all felt very sorry for her. Some brought her long kerchiefs for the journey. Others brought her square cloth to wrap her bundle. And the village landlord gave her a large straw hat to keep the rain off her graying hair, and also a bamboo stick to help her way. So the mother started on her journey, leaving her humble little home. And all the neighbors and friends came with her as far as the main road. There they stopped and exchanged many bows of farewell.

Far from this quiet farming village, there was a big temple set in the heart of a forest. One early autumn morning, in the courtyard of this temple, a boy-priest was sweeping together the scattered brown leaves into a neat pile.

The boy was but thirteen, yet in his fair face there was something about the mouth determined and manlike. He was so earnest over his sweeping that he did not see his comrade coming to him.

"So it is you—sweeping, Ryochi," said his comrade loudly.

For a moment Ryochi did not want to reply. "He has come to taunt me again," he thought to himself, but he answered calmly:

"Ah! Early morning to you, Sojin."

"Why work so hard, Ryochi? Is the praise from our honorable master so very gratifying to you? Or are you so anxious to please your honored father and mother?" he finished jeeringly.

"I told you before, I have neither honored father nor honored mother," spoke Ryochi sadly, but firmly.

Then he straightened the folds of his gray kimono, and taking the broom to the shed, entered within the temple. When his anger gradually cooled, he went into his master's room.

He found the honored priest sitting before the low writing-desk, copying the Scripture on a long scroll. The priest looked up from his writing.

"What is it, Ryochi?" he said in his usual kindly way, seeing the boy bowing to the matted

floor. The old priest put his writing-brush into the upright bamboo tube and waited.

"Honorable master," said Ryochi, "for a long time I have been cherishing a wish."

"That might be granted," the priest said.

"It is a wish," went on Ryochi, "that I might be favored with an answer to a question."

"Speak of it to me, and if I can answer you, I will," the priest said, smiling down at Ryochi, for the priest favored Ryochi above all other boy-priests.

"Then, honorable master, please tell me if I have come down from heaven, as people tell me," said Ryochi earnestly.

For a moment the priest looked startled.

"It must be answered some day," he said at last, thoughtfully. "You have been taunted again by your comrades. Do not mind their foolish talks. Be patient, for that is the right road to priesthood."

The priest left his purple cushion, and opened a painted paper door of the closet. From it he took out a small, old lacquer box, and loosened the darkened red cords that fastened the lid.



"THE EAGLE HAS TAKEN HER BABY!"

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Taking an old paper from the lacquer box, he unfolded it carefully and handed it to Ryochi. This is what the boy read:

*"Even to the world beyond, in my memory you remain,
My little one,
Even without a parent, become a man of goodness."*

Ryochi wondered what this simple poem had to do with himself, but quietly he waited, listening with attention to what the old priest had to say.

"One spring day—" went on the priest, "that must have been twelve years ago," the old priest said slowly, as if he were recalling, "when we were in the garden of the temple, admiring the new bloom of the plum tree, suddenly we heard shrieking cries of a baby. We looked all around, but could not see where the baby was. Only, the cries seemed to come from somewhere very near. Just then, Ryochi,—” the priest paused—"I looked up, and caught sight of a huge eagle on top of a pine tree. From a branch just below the eagle, I saw an infant swinging by the loop of its sash. We were very much excited then. I ordered one

of the boy-priests to bring the longest bamboo pole we had. And two boys together swung the pole, and tried to chase away the bird. Once the pole hit the wings of the fluttering bird. That was too much even for an eagle, and it finally flew away. Then I had one of my followers climb up the tree, and bring down the infant. There was nothing on the infant to tell where that eagle had brought it from. The only thing it had was this piece of paper within a red charm-pouch which was fastened to its sash. I have tendered the infant ever since, and he has grown to be a splendid follower of mine, though he is still a very young man."

Ryochi hung his head low. He had at last learned his own life story. Tears came, though he tried hard to wink them away. So he did come down from heaven, and from unknown parents, after all!

"Think of this poem, Ryochi," the priest spoke quietly. "This poem seems to show that one of your parents may be still alive, though the poem was written by one—probably your father, who

was dying. It was probably your mother that placed this paper in your charm-pouch."

"I thank you, honorable master," said Ryochi solemnly. "I hope I shall prove worthy of all your kindness in bringing me up in place of my parents, whom I have never seen."

Ryochi bowed again as he retired to his little room.

Time passed quickly, and Ryochi was now a young man of twenty-three. Ryochi, since that day when the priest had given him the poem of his unknown parents, set his mind to learning so that he might be able to go on a journey of preaching and at the same time to look for his parent. With such strong determination, he became the most learned of all the young priests.

On the twenty-third anniversary of his coming to the temple, which he and the old priest celebrated as his birthday, Ryochi looked very thoughtful as he bowed before his master.

"I have a great favor to ask you," he said: "I wish to go on a long journey." It was hard for him to say this to a kind priest who had been like father to him for so long a time.

The old priest did not ask a question, but he said haltingly, "I know why you wish to go. I cannot refuse your plea. Go, if you must. But remember that the temple is always waiting for you."

So the next day Ryochi, bidding his master a sad farewell, and exchanging words of "Peace-be-with-you" among his fellow priests, started on a long road of traveling.

In his hand he held a small gong, which he sounded with the small gong-hammer, and chanted the prayer as he wandered through the villages. In the folds of his black priest's robe, he kept the piece of paper with the poem which he had treasured ever since he was thirteen.

Far and wide he went, walking through provinces, gathering people about him, and telling them to be good, for the merciful Buddha was always watching their doings with anxious eyes. Also, he never forgot to recite the poem in a loud melodious voice at the end of all his preachings:

*"Even to the world beyond, in my memory,
you remain—"*

There he would stop, and look about him.

"Is there one who can recite the rest of this poem?" he would ask eagerly. But always everyone looked on, and there was no one who could recite the rest.

Disappointed, yet relentless, Ryochi went on. So the days went by, and months, and finally years, until Ryochi was twenty-nine. Still he had not found his parent. His name, however, had become famous, for there were few in the country so good at preaching and yet so young.

One day, as he passed through a village, there was a crowd gathered about a sign-board, and an elderly gentleman was reading the announcement to the crowd, for in those days not all the people were able to read.

Through this announcement, Ryochi learned that his honored master had died, and that Ryochi himself was wanted at the temple to take the place of the dead priest. The news came with a great surprise and sorrow to Ryochi. He had hoped to return some day to the temple, after finding his parent, and he hoped also that his old master would still be strong. His sor-

row was so great that the thought of becoming the head priest of the great temple was no source of joy to him.

So he made his way to the temple as fast as his tired feet would carry him. When he returned, he gave his first sermon in memory of his dead master. People of every station in life came, eager to see him and to hear him talk, and all the priests of the temple, who had once been his comrades, and who once taunted him, gathered around him with true respect.

It was spring again, and the plum blossoms were just beginning to bloom. The pilgrims, the travelers, and the people who lived far and near, all flocked about him as he sat in the big lacquer chair within the dark temple hall lighted by the large candle-lights and the shimmer of the golden lotus leaves.

Among the listeners was an old woman dressed in a tattered old kimono, whom everyone looked on with disgust. Some said she was mad, for she kept mumbling something to herself. She was saying as if to herself, "Do not mind

me. I have come to hear the great preacher. He will find me a way to console my soul."

After the preaching was over, many of the people kept quiet, because they knew that Ryochi was going to recite the poem. The deep melodious voice of the priest began:

"Even to the world beyond,—"

Before the line was finished, the old woman in the tattered old kimono had risen; she looked like a different person, her eyes suddenly alive.

"Is there one who can finish this poem?" asked Ryochi.

The old woman's voice, now controlled and deep, called out clearly:

"Even without a parent, become a man of goodness."

Not a second passed but Ryochi had descended from his high chair, and the old woman was pushing her way forward through the crowd.

"Whom may you be?" asked the old woman, with an expression of unbelieving awe, "who knows my husband's poem!"

Ryochi, in his purple and brocaded robe, knelt at her feet, and murmured: "You are my honorable mother!" And bowed deep down to the floor.

So the story ends with Ryochi's wish coming true, for through the simple poem he was able to find his parent.

MARCH

March! That was the time when I used to renew my acquaintance with the "kitchen guests." In winter it was too cold to wander about the hallway and the kitchen. Then no place was more comfortable than my honored grandmother's warm room. But when the paper sliding doors could stay open and the air was full of balmy breeze, I loved to wander about the house and the garden.

"Good day. Any fresh fish today?" came a cheerful call from the kitchen door. That was one of the "kitchen guests." I followed Kimi, the maid, to the kitchen. There the lively fishman was standing with the wooden tubs, full of fish, swinging from his shoulder-pole. A fishman in Japan is always quick and alive, and his very briskness makes his fish seem fresher. Kimi brought out a blue china dish, and handed it to the fishman.

"Today, Osashimi," Kimi said cheerfully. That meant we were having the dainty raw fish for dinner.

It was such fun to watch him dress the fish. He lowered the shoulder-pole and took apart the layers of flat wooden tubs. I peeped in. The silvery pink tuna-fish were still snapping their tails. How quickly the fishman had his workshop ready! He turned over the wooden cover, and that became a chopping-board. He took out a sharp narrow knife and now he was ready to slice the snapping fish.

How evenly and thin he sliced it! Then carefully he arranged them on the blue dish. And then he took from under the wooden cover a pink-skinned radish, which he sliced and carved into the prettiest cherry blossom. In it he put a pinch of green horseradish. Then he added a bit of finely cut green seaweed. Why, it was just like a picture! Then quickly he cleaned up his chopping-board, and piled up the wooden tubs neatly into two separate piles. He ran his shoulder-pole through the rope that fas-



IT WAS SUCH A FUN TO WATCH HIM DRESS THE FISH.

—Page 30

tened the tubs together, and lightly swung the whole store over his shoulder. Now he was ready to go. Just before he shut the yard gate, I saw him turn toward us, his heavy store balancing on his shoulders, saying, "Good day to you."

So all through the morning, the bean-curd man, the soy-sauce man and many other errand-men came, each leaving a cheerful "Good day to you," whether there was any order or not.

Thinking what a happy world it was, I walked into the tea-room. I found my kind old nurse sewing near the long fire-box on which the kettle always steamed. So I, too, brought out my sewing-box and started to sew on my doll's red sash.

"Toshino," I said, "honorable Grandmother is having her afternoon sleep now. Will you not tell me a story?"

"*Maa! Maa!*" laughed my old nurse good-naturedly. "When honorable young mistress entered, this old nurse was sure there was to be a story told. So I have one ready on my humble lips."

“Then do hurry and tell me,” I said impatiently.

And so the following story is the one my dear old Toshino told to me when we sat by the long fire-box.

ONE STRAW

Once upon a time there lived a poor youth who had neither a father, a mother, nor even a wife or a child to keep him company. But, worst of all, he did not have a way of living.

One day as he sat in his hut, thinking about his poor fate, he became very unhappy. Then he remembered the temple of Kwannon situated not far away.

"Sooda! Exactly!" He hit his knee. "I will go to the temple and pray and pray until I receive a sign, telling me the way of happiness."

So the youth, putting on his worn straw sandals, and taking an old bamboo stick, hurried to the Kwannon temple. Passing through a huge unpainted gate, he went straight to the entrance and took off his dusty straw sandals. Then quickly he went into the shadowy temple and sat down in front of the holy screen, behind which was the shrine of holy Kwannon.

There he laid his head on the polished floor, saying, "Merciful Kwannon, please give me a better fate. I will never leave here until I have an answer from you. I will never move until then, even if I die right here. Do whatever you like with me, but I cannot go on the way I have been going any longer."

On the third day he was still waiting for a sign from the Kwannon. He was sitting there motionless, exactly the way he commenced three days before, with his head on the polished floor.

"What is that foolish youth going to do?" said one of the priests. "Does he want to starve himself to death?"

"That will be a bad thing for this temple," said another.

"We had better give him food to keep him alive," said the third priest.

So the priests took turns in bringing him a lacquer tray on which were a bowl of rice, a lacquer bowl of salty bean-curd soup, and a small dish of cooked vegetables. This the youth accepted gladly, for he was very, very hungry.

Thus the youth stayed there, praying for the

good-luck period of three times seven, twenty-one days. And on the night of the twenty-first day, he had a dream of an old, old man, with long silvery whiskers, who came out from behind the holy screen. The old, old man said in a venerable voice, "I am the messenger of Kwannon. The merciful god has taken pity on you. So you will be answered somewhat for your plea. But you must not speak so ungraciously of your own ill fate, for in the other world before you entered this earthly one, you had done wrong. For that, you are now atoning. Go from this temple as soon as possible. And however a humble thing it may be, the first thing you touch after you leave here, pick it up and keep it. Then better fate will greet you."

No sooner had the old man spoken the last word of his message than he was gone, and the youth awoke from his dream. He blinked his eyes, stretched his stiff limbs, and rose to his feet. Then he went to the priests, bidding them farewell and thanking them for their kindness. And now he was ready to go his way. Not having moved his legs so long, he was still very unsteady

in his walking. Just as he stepped out of the temple, he slipped and fell. As he raised himself, he found he was holding something in his hand. He looked at it. It was only a strand of straw.

"Nanda! Is this all!" And he started to throw it aside when he remembered the words of the old, old man: "However a humble thing it may be——"

Picking it up, he clasped it tight in his hand, and started aimlessly toward the open road. As he sauntered along, holding his one strand of straw, a bumble-bee came along. It kept buzzing around him, making a nuisance. At first the youth chased it away with the straw, but it would not leave him. Finally he caught it, and tied its back with the end of the straw. With the bee twirling at the end of the straw, the youth continued on his aimless journey.

Way ahead, he saw a group of people approaching toward him. Nearer they came, and nearer, until he saw that they were two dignified samurai-attendants wearing two swords in their heavy silk skirt-trousers. They were followed by an elderly lady-in-waiting. Then came the



"THEN WE WILL BE MUCH GRATIFIED, IF YOU WILL GIVE US THE
STRAW TOY YOU HAVE IN YOUR HAND. OUR YOUNG MASTER
DESIRES IT."

palanquin, its pole shouldered by sturdy carriers. When the little procession passed him, one of the samurai-attendants came back, followed by the elderly lady-in-waiting. The samurai spoke to the youth first:

"Pardon. We have a request to make of you."

The youth was startled. He never had anyone make a request of him. But he answered:

"Whatever it may be, if it serves you."

"Then, we will be much gratified if you will give us the straw toy you have in your hand. Our young master desires it."

The youth hesitated a moment. Then he said, "I did hope to keep it. But if so humble a thing pleases your young master, I will be happy to present it."

"Thank you most gratefully," spoke the lady-in-waiting. "These are but most simple things, but please keep them," she said, handing him three rare and most handsome oranges on folds of stiff white paper.

The youth accepted them with thanks, and chuckled to himself that so simple a straw was the cause of such delicious oranges. The lady-

in-waiting accepted the straw with the bumblebee still buzzing at the end of it, and took it to the palanquin. The little screen was lifted, and a small boy, garbed in green brocade, lifted his hand out to receive it. Then the procession went on, and the youth went on his way more hopeful.

He passed men, ox-carts, and white-gowned pilgrims on their way to the temples, but still nothing happened. There came along a procession of samurai, a handsome palanquin, followed by women-in-waiting and the sandal-carriers. Suddenly the procession came to a stop as one of the young women-in-waiting fell to the ground panting.

"Where can we get some water?" asked one of the samurai to passers-by. But everyone said there was not any near.

"If you are looking for water," said the youth, coming to the samurai timidly, "I have these oranges. Could these be of any service?"

"We accept them with all gratitude," said one of the elder ladies-in-waiting, looking at the juicy oranges. "She is dying of thirst."

As soon as the elder lady-in-waiting received

the oranges, she squeezed the juice and gave it to the young woman, who was still panting on the ground. When she had taken all the juice of the oranges, the young woman recovered completely.

"You have saved my life," she said to the youth. "If we were not traveling so far from home, I would give you more to show my gratitude. But as it is, please accept these," she said, handing him three large bolts of white linen. "These are all I have now."

The youth accepted them with many thanks and chuckled to himself that only three oranges were the cause of so handsome a gift.

With three handsome bolts of linen tightly clasped under his arm, the youth was ready for a better future. As he went on, the passing people became less and less, and finally there was not a single person on the road. Only the crooked pine trees on either side greeted his path. Then the night came. But not far off, the youth saw a sign of an inn on a lighted lantern. So he walked to the inn, and there spent the night, paying for his lodging with one of his bolts of linen.

The next day, he was up with the sun, and started again on his aimless but hopeful journey. As he stepped out on the dusty road, he saw some travelers with cloth bundles on their shoulders. He looked far ahead of him. If he could see a procession! That always brought him luck.

He leaped with joy within when he thought he saw a procession coming. It was yet so far off, he could not see it clearly. He watched it intently as he walked quickly on. He was panting with excitement. The procession seemed to stop. The youth walked on still faster. As he came near, to his disappointment, he found that it was not a procession, but only two dignified samurai, a sandal-carrier, and a horse lying on the ground. He was disgusted beyond words. Then he heard one of the dignified samurai speak.

"It is indeed a sad fate. This was the most precious possession of our lord. But it cannot be helped. It is dead. We must hurry on, and tell our lord about it," he said, still looking at the horse lying on the dusty road. The youth looked at it too. It was a beautiful horse, dead. And

the fine saddle told it belonged, no doubt, to some great lord of a province. The travelers joined the group and stared at the graceful dead horse. The two samurai bid the sandal-carrier good-by and went on their way. Even the travelers did not stand there long. Finally, on the road, there was no one else except the sandal-carrier, the dead horse, and the youth.

"What shall I do?" said the sandal-carrier as if to himself, putting his rough hand to his forehead. "They have given this to me and I must do something with it. But what can one do with a beautiful dead horse?"

"Will you not let me have it?" spoke up the youth. "In exchange for the horse, I will give this to you," he said, presenting the handsome bolt of linen.

The sandal-carrier was more than pleased with this offer. He took the bolt of linen and, bidding the youth farewell, went his way.

"*Maa! Maa!* What a beautiful horse. I did not mean to give that bolt of good linen. Perhaps that would have come in handy for another procession. But you are so beautiful. Poor thing!"

the youth said to himself, coming nearer to the horse and stroking its head. Suddenly he felt its head move. The youth sprang up; he was frightened at first. But, seeing the animal open its soft velvety eyes, he knew it was alive. He hurried to the nearest well and brought back plenty of water in a wooden bucket, and let the animal refresh itself with the cool drink. By and by the animal got up and was as lively as ever.

The youth was overjoyed. In his heart, he prayed his thanks most earnestly to the god Kwannon. Then he went on his way—this time on horseback—with a new spirit of adventure. Soon the night approached, so he stopped at an inn, and paid for his lodging and much straw for the horse with the one remaining bolt of linen.

The next morning the youth rose early, mounted his horse, and started out on a long day's journey. The horse was wonderful in its speed, so the youth was able to ride many, many miles that day. But the night came too quickly, and he had not had good luck as yet. The youth became much worried, for there was no more

bolt of fine linen to exchange for food and lodging.

As he sat on the horse, thinking about his predicament, he heard some voices. Looking about him in the darkening twilight, he saw that the horse had found its way in front of a humble farmer's house.

"There is no way to go," a man's voice was saying very sadly.

"But we must go. Your brother is very ill," said a woman's voice. "Ah, ah—" she moaned, "if we only had a horse!"

The youth thought for a second. Then he called in a loud voice:

"Here is one!"

There was a commotion in the house, and a man with a lighted oil-wick stand appeared at the entrance.

"Whom may you be?" said the man, coming outside and looking intently at the beautiful horse. "You do not mean you will let us have this horse?"

The youth gave a nod.

"If that be true, I will give you this house and

the land I own. If I return, give them back to me. If not, keep them."

The youth was pleased beyond words. He got off the horse and gave it to the man. Soon the man, his wife, and their children were off on their long journey.

Ever since then the youth was happy. For the man never came back, and the farm flourished with his hard labor. He fixed over the humble little house into a nice home with fresh wooden boards and newly pasted paper doors. Then a lovely bride came to him.

As the years went by, he was never lonely, for his father-in-law, mother-in-law, his wife, and happy children kept him company. So he was never again that poor youth who neither had a father, a mother nor even a wife or a child. Nor was he any longer that youth who did not have a way of living. For there is an old saying in Japan: "The Merciful Kwannon will always help the needy, if the man will wish it with all his heart."

APRIL

April! That is the cherry blossom time. There is a favorite song we always sing, and it goes something like this:

Cherry blossom! Cherry blossom!
Far as the eyes can see
April sky is glowing pink.
Is it mist or blooming cherries?
Let us go! Let us go! And see!

It seems like yesterday when honorable Grandmother, our young maid, and I went to the Opposite Shore to admire the cherry blossoms. An old ferry-man took us across. I can see even now the glowing pink mist of the blossoms that seemed to envelop the whole shore as we watched the scenery before us. Soon we landed and climbed up the low bank. Standing there, with the cherry trees on either side of the road as far

as the eyes could see, it was like looking into a flowery tunnel.

There were many people strolling beneath the heavily laden branches. Some were schoolboys on their way home, some were gay young men singing lively songs, and some were old men walking leisurely, perhaps trying to make poems. There were young women, too, with their babies on their backs. The tiny tots were holding tight the toy branches from which gay good-luck dogs and black and white miniature drums were dangling. It was such fun to see all these people—just like a big family picnic. Only we did not know each other by name. But we had one thing in common—we had all come out in this spring-time to celebrate the glory of the blossoms.

We wandered on and on, looking up at the pink, lace-like flowers. And the sunlight was sifting through the open lace-work in slanting lines, and the petals were ever falling and falling around us. I thought to myself nothing else on earth could be quite so beautiful.

“Sunlight, cherry trees, and happy people,” I

thought to myself. "There is nothing else I could wish for except a real good story."

"Honorable Grandmother," I said suddenly, "I feel much in the mood for a story. May I hear one?"

Honorable Grandmother smiled as usual. "I can tell you one. Let us go there," she said, leading me and our maid, who was following us, into a little tea-house near by, where there were large, matted seat-benches with soft red blankets spread over them under the cherry trees. There we took off our sandals, and as the tea-house maid brought us tea and cakes, honorable Grandmother told us this story:

APPLE-BUMP OJII SAN

Once upon a time there lived an old man at the foot of a mountain. He was called by the village folks "Apple-Bump Ojii San."

One day as usual, Apple-Bump Ojii San prepared himself to go to the mountain to gather chestnut hulls. On his feet he wore straw sandals, over his cheek he tied a long blue kerchief. Then, tucking up his striped kimono, and a large basket on his shoulders, Apple-Bump Ojii San was ready to start on his way.

Now, Apple-Bump Ojii San was on the whole a happy man. He liked his little home. He liked his little garden with the neat bamboo fence which he had made himself. He liked best of all watering his favorite plants in the morning, just after he had washed his face with the cool water from the well. But he was very unhappy about one thing. That was his bump, as big as an apple, on his right cheek. It made him sad to

have everyone call him "Apple-Bump Ojii San."

"Well," he thought, as he trudged through the soft fallen leaves, "I must be contented, for we cannot have everything."

Soon he came to the top of the mountain, where he found many chestnut hulls. The old man leaned over, picked up the chestnut hulls one by one with his long chopsticks, and threw them back over his shoulder into the basket. He continued to pick them up for quite a little while, until he found himself much farther in the deep shadowy groves. Then the sun started to shine through the foliage from right above his head.

"Ah! Ah!" said Apple-Bump Ojii San. "I am tired. I think I will have a puff of smoke, and have my lunch."

He sat down leaning against the trunk of a big pine tree, and slipped his arms out of the fasteners of his basket. Then from his sash he pulled out his pipe and a small bag full of tobacco. After he had had several puffs, Apple-Bump Ojii San unfastened a bundle of square cloth which was hung on the side of his sash, and took out his lunch. It was a large

bundle of bamboo skin, within which were five rice-balls. He picked one up and ate it.

"*Yaa!* Tastes good! It is good!" He chuckled to himself.

Then he ate another rice-ball, and another, until all five of them were gone. Having satisfied his appetite, he reclined and lifted his eyes to the sky, when suddenly he saw dark clouds gathering.

"It looks like rain," said the old man, a little uneasily.

No sooner had he said that when the "pitter-patter" rain started to come down. It did not stop, but started to pour.

"*Ya! Taihen!* Catastrophe!" the old man cried, putting up the long blue kerchief over his head.

Not far away, he saw the huge hollow of a decayed old tree, so he ran right into it.

"*Yare! Yare!*" panted the old man. "I must wait in this dark place. But I am thankful that I am not going to be wet."

He did not know how long he waited in there. The rain and the darkness must have made him

sleepy, for he found himself suddenly awakened by loud laughter and hand-clapping. He peeped out. The sun was shining! And what a sight! Apple-Bump Ojii San blinked his eyes. Was he dreaming? No! No! He saw his basket full of chestnut hulls just as he left it, only it was glistening with the dew. And right before the pine tree five happy monster *oni* were having a gay time.

There were a green *oni*, red *oni*, sand-colored *oni*, black *oni*, and a brown *oni*. The red *oni* was dancing in the middle, while the rest of them sat in a half circle eating, clapping hands, and laughing very loud. Near the circle there was a bonfire, and the brown *oni* was roasting a most delicious-looking big fish.

At first Apple-Bump Ojii San was very much frightened to see real monsters, with their sharp teeth and horns sticking out from the corners of their foreheads. But as he watched the red *oni* dancing, skipping over the green grass, and the sun flickering around him, and all the rest laughing so happily, the fear quickly went out of him, and Apple-Bump Ojii San felt a sudden urge to

dance. Before he knew quite what he was doing, he was dancing, swaying his body and moving his hands in time with the red *oni*'s dancing.

"*Ya! Look!*" cried the red *oni*. "An old man is dancing."

At this cry, all the *oni* turned to look at him, and they began to clap their huge hands in time to his steps.

"Come and join our company," spoke the green *oni*. "We want to see you dance."

So, though Apple-Bump Ojii San felt a little timid at first, he came around and joined the happy circle.

"I have never seen a human being dance," said the green *oni*. "I want to see you dance some more. Here, take a bunch of these grapes before dancing," he continued, holding out a big bunch of the most beautiful purple grapes Ojii San had ever seen. Apple-Bump Ojii San was very timid in accepting the grapes, but afraid of angering the *oni*. He put one grape in his mouth. What a delicious taste it had! He ate one, then another and another, until he ate every one of them.



HE PEEPED OUT. THE SUN WAS SHINING. AND WHAT A SIGHT!

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"*Tatta!*" He smacked his lips; he had never tasted such juicy grapes in all his life. Then, making his formal bow to the green *oni*, who seemed to be the master of all the monsters, Apple-Bump Ojii San started to dance.

And how he did dance! He made the *oni* laugh and sway as they kept time to his steps. Some were tapping their padded feet. Others roared until the whole mountain echoed with their hilarity. Finally he stopped. He had danced all he could.

"Well," said the green *oni*, "you dance so well. What shall I do for you?"

The old man said, "Oh, I wish I did not have this apple-bump on my cheek. But that wish can never be granted!"

No sooner had he uttered this than the green *oni* said, "I will take it off for you!" And coming up to Apple-Bump Ojii San, he clutched the apple-bump with his large green hand and, with a big grunt, he pulled it right off.

The old man felt his cheek suddenly lightened. Could it be possible? It was true. For

the green *oni* held the apple-bump right in his big hand.

"Thankful am I!" he exclaimed with grateful heart.

"Now!" cried the green *oni* in good humor, "before we eat you up, you'd better run for your life."

No sooner had the monster finished his words than the old man made one jerky bow, and ran and ran down the soft leafy road, even forgetting his basket of chestnut hulls. As he ran, he heard behind him the laughter of the *oni* echo and re-echo through the mountainside.

As soon as he reached his humble house, he went to the well to have a cool drink after the long run. As he poured the water into the wooden tub near the well, a very different reflection of himself greeted him.

"It is true," he cried, staring at his own smooth face without the trace of the bump on his cheek. "I will never again say that the monsters, the *oni*, are terrors of human beings. They certainly treated me well!" He chuckled joyously.

Now, at this moment, a pair of curious eyes

were peeping over his little bamboo fence. It was the greedy old man next door. He also had a large bump, as big as a peach, on the left cheek, and the neighbors all called him "Peach-Bump Ojii San." Peach-Bump Ojii San shook his head from side to side, thinking what a fortunate man his neighbor was. He slowly made his way to the lattice door of Apple-Bump Ojii San, and called:

"Good day. I am Peach-Bump Ojii San. Are you at home?"

"Ah! Is it you?" said Apple-Bump Ojii San, sliding the door open and greeting his guest. "Good day to you! Please see me! See! I have no more bump on my cheek!"

"So I see!" cried the other. "Tell me how you lost it."

And so the good-natured Apple-Bump Ojii San told his greedy neighbor all he remembered about what happened on the mountain; how the shower came, and how he went inside the hollow of a tree, and how when he woke up, he saw the *oni*. He related everything. Peach-Bump Ojii San listened with greedy eyes.

"Thank you for telling me," he said. Then quickly bidding the host farewell, he went away.

The next day, Peach-Bump Ojii San prepared himself for a journey up the mountain. He chuckled to himself: "Ha, ha! I will get a great feast of the grapes that my neighbor tells me of, and then I will have my bump taken off. And on the way back, I will pick up the basketful of chestnut hulls that my hasty neighbor left on the mountain. And I will keep it for myself. Oh, this is going to be a lucky day for me."

He looked outside. Clouds were beginning to gather.

"Ah! I must hurry," he cried. "Before the shower comes, I must be near the hollow tree."

He wrapped the long kerchief about his face, and tucked up his kimono. Then he put on his straw sandals, and on his shoulders he carried a large basket for the chestnut hulls.

"No," he thought to himself, "I must have one thing more to be like my neighbor. I must carry my lunch."

So he hurried to the kitchen, and opening the lid of a wooden rice tub, he kneaded five rice-

balls, and wrapping them in a bamboo skin, put them in the square cloth which he tied on the side of his sash. Then he hurried up the steep road breathlessly. When he reached the top of the mountain, he ran farther and farther into the deep grove. He had time enough only to pick up a few chestnut hulls, for the rain was very threatening. Then he took out his tobacco pipe. He took only two or three puffs of smoke; then hurriedly he unwrapped the square of cloth, and took out the rice-balls, which he quickly tried to finish. When he was eating the third rice-ball, the rain started to pour.

"*Taihen!* Catastrophe!" he cried. "I must finish the five rice-balls as my neighbor did."

So, as he ran, trying to find the huge tree with the large hollow, he pushed all the rice-balls into his greedy mouth. When he reached the hollow of the tree, he was almost exhausted. He had been worrying and hurrying so much ever since he had finished talking with his neighbor that he was very tired. The next thing he knew, he awoke at the sound of roars of angry voices. This time the monster *oni* were not in such good

humor, for the ground was too wet after the hard rain, and the red *oni* could not dance so well.

Not knowing that the old man had come out of the hollow and stood there waiting to be called, the *oni* went on roaring, eating grapes, and devouring the big fish that had just been roasted over the bonfire. But as he watched the terrible-looking monsters, the old man became very much frightened. Forgetting why he came, but only wanting to get away, he started to run.

"Wait!" a loud voice called—it was the green *oni*. "Old man, you must dance before you go. We want to see a real good dance, like the one we had yesterday."

So the frightened old man had to come back, and join the horrible-looking *oni*. The greedy old man wanted to have a taste of the grapes before he commenced to dance, but the monsters were too much in a hurry to be amused.

Now, the truth was that the greedy old man did not know much about dancing, so when he commenced to dance, he did not know what to do. He started to skip and jump to make up his own rhythm. At first the *oni* were quiet, but soon

one of them cried out, "This is no dance. Hurry and show us your steps, like the ones the other man did yesterday."

The greedy old man was much excited by this time. Tremblingly, he tried very hard to imitate his neighbor's dance.

"No good! No good!" cried the green *oni*.

"*Aah! Aah!*" said Peach-Bump Ojii San. "If you will take off the bump on my cheek, I will do much better."

"What!" roared the green *oni*. "Is that why you came? Just for that I will give you another bump to make an even balance."

The green *oni* came up to the frightened, trembling old man, and with a big slap, threw something against his right cheek.

"There!" he cried. "This is what the other old man left behind. You can have it. Now, if you stand there too long, we will eat you up."

With tears and screams, the old man drew back away from them, and as the red *oni* came toward him, the greedy old man turned, and ran for his life. The last thing the greedy old man heard as he ran down the hill was: "I would not

eat that greedy old man. He cannot even lift his feet right." And the loud roars of the monsters were echoing and re-echoing through the darkening woods.

After that whenever the greedy old man passed through the village, the children cried out, "There goes Double-Bump Ojii San." This unfortunate old man never told about his story of the mountain, and so no one ever knew how he came to have another bump on his cheek. But Apple-Bump Ojii San was always fond of telling how he got rid of his bump; nor was he ever lonely again. For all the village children came to hear him tell the story, especially on a cold wintry day, when it was hard for him to go out. The children would go and gather for him the chestnut hulls for his hearth. When they returned, they would cry out,

"Now, please, Ojii San, tell us the story of the mountain *oni* once more. Here is your fuel!"

MAY

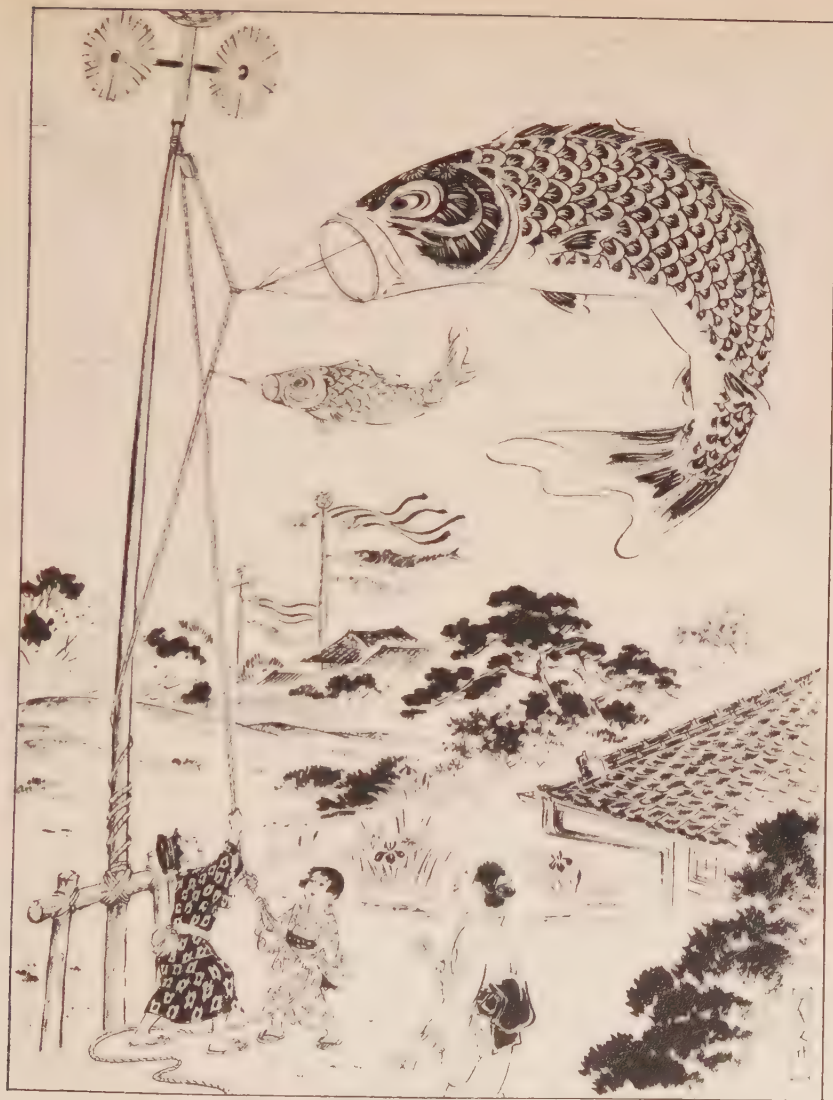
If you come to Japan in the spring on the morning of the fifth day of the fifth month, you will see a pretty sight. Every home which has a boy in the family puts out a big colored fish made out of goods on top of a tall bamboo pole in the back yard. When the air fills its mouth, the big fish, which may be twenty feet long, puffs out into a huge rounded shape, and as the wind blows, it begins to swim and snap in the air. This colored fish represents the brave carp-fish which is said to swim up the mighty cataract and finally reaches its destination.

And inside the house the festival dolls are brought out and carefully put in the right places on the "seat of honor," the raised alcove where beautiful things are always placed. This is a great day for the boys, for May the fifth is the only day the boys can have their festival dolls on display in the whole year. And this reminds me

of the day when I helped my aunt take out the dolls for my little boy cousin. What wonderful dolls they were! They looked as if they had stepped right out of the old prints. I can see now the stern warrior, wearing a real armor. Only it was a miniature one. Its plates were lacquered and interwoven with thick scarlet and purple cords. Then there was the guardian god looking ever so fierce, though his mission was most faithful.

And right beside these figures of war, there was a tiny doll dressed in red and yellow brocade, sitting inside a red lacquer soup-bowl! In his hand he carried a chopstick. He was the One Inch Fellow, who was so small that, instead of sailing in a boat, he had to sail in a soup-bowl, and instead of using a real oar, he used a chopstick. Yet he finally sailed on to his goal and success. My aunt had bought this doll especially for my cousin.

So it is no wonder that every Japanese boy looks for a sunny day on the morning of May the fifth. Then his big fish can fly gloriously in the blue sky. Even his sister helps, by making a



IF YOU COME TO JAPAN IN THE SPRING ON THE FIFTH DAY OF THE
FIFTH MONTH, YOU WILL SEE A PRETTY SIGHT.

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weather-man doll the night before. She would carefully write on a piece of paper, "It will shine; it will shine; it will shine——" until the whole paper is covered with these words. With this paper she would make a doll. And on it she would attach the head made out of a plain piece of paper. On its face she would draw one eyebrow, one eye, half of a nose, and half of a mouth. And if the next day proves fine, she would finish drawing the rest of the face, and let this weather-man doll float down the river so it will reach the palace of the beautiful Sea Queen, where it will find much happiness.

So now I will begin the story of One Inch Fellow, which is a typical symbolism of what the boys' festival stands for; it is the festival for boys who must grow to be faithful and courageous, and overcome many obstacles, as did the One Inch Fellow.

ONE INCH FELLOW

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman in the village of Naniwa, which is the present city of Osaka. They were a happy couple, but there was just one thing they were unhappy about. They did not have a single child to keep them cheery in their lonely old age. So one afternoon the old man and the old woman went to the temple and prayed before the holy screen, behind which was the shrine.

"Please honorable Kwannon, the god of mercy, give us a child. We will be happy to have any child, even if it be as small as a thumb," they pleaded, very earnestly.

One summer evening as the old couple were viewing the beautiful moon, they saw something. At first it was only a speck of darkness coming straight from the silvery moon. As they watched it, it seemed to come nearer and nearer. Soon they discovered by the light of the moon that it

was a purple cloud coming straight toward them. The fluffy purple cloud floated within the front room where the old couple were sitting. Then it twirled and untwirled itself, and quickly wafted away. The old couple, in wonder, sat very still. Then they discovered that the purple cloud had left behind a tiny boy as small as a thumb.

So this gift from the god, the tiny boy as small as a thumb, was gratefully received by the old couple. Soon they discovered that the little fellow did not grow in size at all. Of course when the old couple prayed to the Kwannon, they did not think the god would really give them such a little fellow. But, nevertheless, they were grateful, and with loving hands they cared for him. And as he was always as small as a thumb, the old couple named him "One Inch Fellow."

The good old woman was much worried whenever One Inch Fellow ventured out alone on the street.

"Old man, old man, what if the children on the street fight with him? He will be crushed!" she would say.

But she did not have to worry about that. For

whenever One Inch Fellow saw the teasing children coming upon him, quick as a flash he would dart away between people's wooden clogs, so that the teasing children could not even find him.

Fourteen summers went by and One Inch Fellow was now a young man.

"Honorable Father, honorable Mother," said he one day, bowing before his parents, who were seated in front of the low wooden table. The table looked like a huge roof beside him. The old man looked way down upon his son.

"What is it, my son?"

"I would like to have permission to go away for a while," he said.

"And why is that?" asked the parents in surprise.

"Because I am a grown son now," he said earnestly, straightening his sitting position with great dignity, and lifting his tiny head high. "My gratitude to you is higher than the highest of mountains and deeper than the deepest of seas. Now I wish to go to the Capital of Kyoto to make a name for myself, so you will be proud of me."

The old parents looked down on their tiny son.

They were very sorry to let him go. But so manly was the little fellow's speech, the old man said heartily,

"I give you permission. For there is an old saying, 'The more precious be your loved one, need you let him travel more the far.' Go, my son!"

The next few days were busy ones, for the old woman wanted to make a new kimono for One Inch Fellow.

"Ah!" she said to the old man. "In the flowery Kyoto many young men dress with style. I will have my son look his best."

"What can I do about his boat?" thought the old man. "He is too small for a real boat. And he must have a sword. No son of mine can step out into the world without a sword, the emblem of his soul."

In this way, the old man and the old woman were very busy planning for him.

Too soon the parting day arrived. From early morning the old woman was up, cooking over the charcoal fire, while the old man was preparing his farewell speech to his son. Then in si-

lence the three partook of their breakfast. And One Inch Fellow ate the small chestnuts and tasty seaweed soup for good luck. After breakfast One Inch Fellow was ready to start, his little square cloth neatly tied. Within the cloth was newly cooked rice-balls with salted plums.

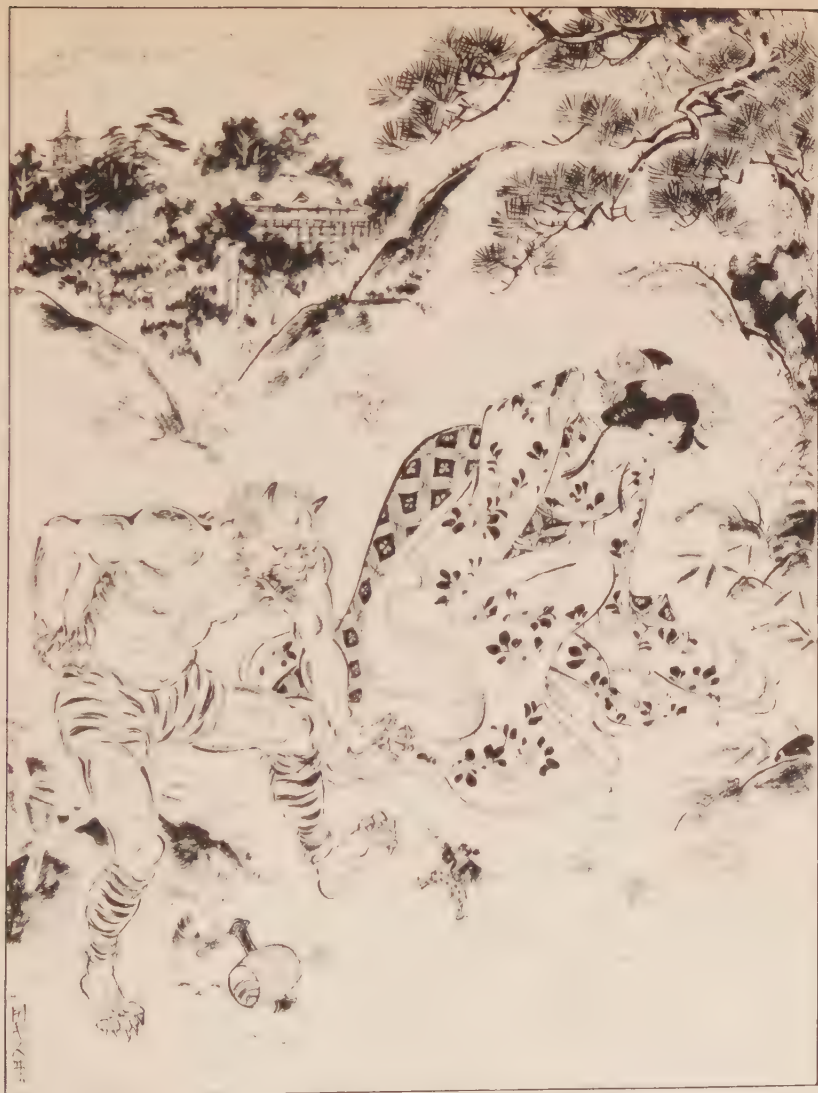
"Honorable parents, I take my leave now," he said, bowing before them.

"This," said his father, handing him a shiny, sharp needle in a sheath of straw, "is your sword. Always keep it stainless like your soul."

One Inch Fellow received the sword with reverence, and slipped it in his tiny belt.

"This," said his father, placing a black lacquered soup-bowl before him, "is your boat. Steer it well with this oar to Kyoto," he continued, placing one chopstick beside the soup-bowl. "Now go, my son."

His parents walked with him all the way to the water-front, carrying his boat for him. Then the old man put the bowl on the water, and helped his son get into it. Soon One Inch Fellow steered his boat out to the deep. The voices



'DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?' HE CRIED, LOOKING WAY UP AT THE
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of the old kept calling after him as he rowed away.

"Banzai! Banzai!" The old man continued to wave his uplifted fan, but the old woman hid her face behind her sleeve.

So started One Inch Fellow toward his famous career. He rowed on and on with his chopstick oar. Sometimes he would be thrown clear off his course by the angry waves. On a stormy day he hid behind a support of the bridge and rested himself. When the gentle breeze arose, he sailed on. Finally one early morning he saw the city of Kyoto rising in the mist. With happy *"Ahs!"* and *"Banzai!"* he steered toward the shore. As he stepped on the shore, he pushed his boat away, and said aloud to himself with all confidence, "When I return to Naniwa, I will have an attendant. I shall not need this boat then."

Certainly the capital was big and noisy compared with his quiet home of Naniwa. He walked briskly in the middle of the wide street where throngs of people passed by. He was so tiny that no one even noticed him. He passed by several large wooden gates and high, somber

yellow walls. Out of those, he chose the biggest and longest walls.

"This," he said to himself, "seems to be a big household. I will offer my services here."

So through the largest gateway he made his way. This estate happened to belong to a famous lord of Kyoto. After walking over the smooth sand road a long time, he finally came to the immense entrance of the mansion.

There was a pair of black lacquered shoes on the great stone step at the entrance. Evidently the lord of the mansion was about to go out.

"I plea for recognition!" he shouted as loud as he could.

"Who is that?" demanded a dignified voice. It was the lord of the mansion himself who spoke.

"It is I, the youth from Naniwa," answered One Inch Fellow.

The lord came out, and looked around, but he could not see anyone. Then again One Inch Fellow shouted: "Here I am!"

At this, the startled gentleman looked way down on the ground.

"Yo! What a cunning little fellow. But you

certainly have a loud voice! You are just like one of those dolls in the toy garden! Who are you?"

"I am called One Inch Fellow. I have come all the way from Naniwa to serve a great lord."

"Yo! I do not know what a little fellow like you can do."

"But!" cried One Inch Fellow, "certainly you can find no other fellow like me on this earth."

"That is so! All right! You may serve me," said the lord.

So from that day, One Inch Fellow became one of the many servants of the lord of Kyoto. He was given the duty of cleaning all the lacquered shoes. Besides doing his duty well, in his spare moments he never failed to pick up a fallen leaf or a pine-needle on the mossy ground. He was always courteous and bright, and did willingly any errands asked of him. So the whole household called him kindly, "One Inch Fellow! One Inch Fellow!" And he was a much sought-after little man in the servants' hall.

Finally the attention of the beautiful Princess,

the only daughter of the lord, was upon him. He soon became a favorite of hers. And the lord gave him permission to be her body-guard. In winter he went with her to every New Year festivity; in spring he accompanied her to cherry-blossom outings, and in summer he, too, shared in the viewing of the full moon. And so when the fall came, he escorted the Princess with several other attendants, to the shrine of Ise, where every maiden, at least once before her marriage, makes her holy pilgrimage.

It was a long journey, and so One Inch Fellow retired once in a while into the pocket folds of one of the men attendants, who gladly carried him till he was refreshed enough to walk.

After the homage to the shrine, the Princess, and One Inch Fellow in close attendance on her, followed by other attendants, were passing through the shadows of a long avenue of cedar trees, when a huge monster *oni* came leaping out of the darkness, yelling, "*Wa——!*"

At this terrible sight of the ugly huge monster, the beautiful Princess screamed, "*Alee——!*" and fainted on the spot, while all

the attendants, terrified, ran away in different directions. Only the tiny One Inch Fellow stood his ground.

"*Nanda!* What are you!" he shouted, standing before the unconscious Princess. "Do you know who I am!" he cried, looking way up to the fierce *oni*. "I am the youth who serves the great lord of Kyoto who lives in the greatest mansion in the country. This is his only daughter and I am the famous One Inch Fellow, who is a special favorite of the lord. If you even so much as come near the Princess, beware!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! I like to hear you talk!" laughed the huge monster *oni*, looking down on the speck of tiny being on the ground. "But this is enough. Do not bother me. Or I will eat you up too."

"*Yoshi!* All right!" cried One Inch Fellow, angrily making ready to confront his enemy.

As One Inch Fellow expected, the huge monster caught hold of him and placed him on the palm of his big hand. Then awkwardly he started to put him into his huge red mouth. But quickly One Inch Fellow darted from the huge

palm and landed on his cheek. Then climbing up to the monster's eye, he whipped out his needle sword and started to thrust it in.

"*Itai!* Ouch!" cried the monster, trying to catch him. But One Inch Fellow slipped from the monster's fingers and went on thrusting his needle sword all over his face.

"No more! No more!" cried the huge monster. "I make my humble bow to you!" he roared.

Then One Inch Fellow quickly ran down to the ground, while the big monster, with a tremendous yell, ran into the shadows again. By this time the Princess came to and quickly composed herself.

"What happened to the *oni*?" she questioned earnestly as she looked all around.

"I have chased him away with my sword. Do not worry, Princess; One Inch Fellow, your body-guard, is at your service."

Then the Princess exclaimed, "What is that?"

A few feet away from her a large wooden hammer lay.

"It is something the monster has left behind

him, I think," said One Inch Fellow. "If you are entirely rested, let us hasten homeward."

"Wait!" cried the Princess, going to the hammer and taking it up with both her delicate hands. "Stand there, One Inch Fellow. This looks like the magic hammer that makes dreams come true. If so, that monster must have been the god in disguise. He had come to test you. Or else he would not have left behind such a precious hammer."

"May I ask, Princess, how do you know that is such a wondrous gift?"

"We shall see," said the Princess very solemnly, with an undercurrent of excitement. One Inch Fellow had never seen her act in such an awesome manner before.

"If you strike this hammer three times," said the Princess, "anything you wish will come true—if this be the magic hammer my honored father has spoken of! What do you wish now, One Inch Fellow?—Speak!"

"I have nothing to wish for. My wish has been granted. I am serving your honored father.

Still—perhaps I might like to be a little taller than I am now.”

“Please, merciful god, make him tall as a man,” the Princess said very quietly, as she struck the hammer down on the ground.

Strange! One Inch Fellow began to see the earth go lower and lower. In reality it was not the earth. It was he that was getting taller.

“Please, merciful god, make him tall as a man,” the Princess said the second time, as she struck the hammer down on the ground.

Then she looked up to him smiling, as she repeated for the third time, “Oh, merciful god, make him tall as a man!” She lifted the hammer up into the air and down to the ground again. It made a deep thud on the ground.

The beautiful Princess sat motionless, with a faint embarrassed smile. Then she went over to the cabinet-box which the attendant had thrown down before running away, and from it she took out a round mirror, which she faced toward him. With heart-bound joy, One Inch Fellow looked into the mirror. He was actually tall! She lifted the mirror higher and higher to let him see

himself from the tips of his feet clear up to his manly face. He was not just tall, but magnificent in his full six feet!

With joy in their hearts, the Princess and the tall youth returned to the mansion of the lord. For saving the life of his precious daughter, the lord raised him to a very high rank, while the cowardly attendants who had fled at the sight of the monster, resigned from their positions in great shame. The news of the brave youth who saved the life of the Princess was gossiped in every corner of the court. Finally the heroic story reached even the gracious ears of the Emperor, and the youth was immediately summoned before His Majesty. The Emperor, recognizing the ability of the youth, gave him a still higher title, and not long after, gave him an honorable position under the Emperor's régime.

Before three full moons passed, the youth, dressed in his full regalia, went to welcome his honored parents. Behind him followed his attendants and two palanquins which were to carry his honored parents back to the flowery capital of Kyoto, where the youth had built him-

self a beautiful new home. So it was that the old couple were made very happy in sharing the honors of their son. But they were happy, above all, for the youth who was no longer as tiny as a thumb. And in their appreciative remembrances, their old feet were never too weary pilgrimaging regularly to the temple to offer their silent prayers of gratitude.

JUNE

June in Japan was the happiest month to me. And it was, as I look back now, like summer Christmas to go to the Ennichi, the temple festival. Of course there were many temple festivals in the winter-time too, but somehow these Ennichi in the summer-time were different. For the season itself was inviting, and just strolling through the festival throngs in the temple yard of an evening was pleasure in itself.

How well I remember the thrill of one evening, as Kimi, the maid, and I came near the temple yard, which was bustling with festival things. For many blocks leading to the temple, there were lighted tent-stores on either side. What pretty, bright displays they were!

Here was a ladies' shop displaying pretty red combs and silver-blossom hairpins, pink and green *tie-die* to be worn on a pretty girl's newly dressed pompadour. There was the small old

candy-makers! How vividly I see his face now! He was selling pink and white candy-sticks, and as eager children held out copper coins, he gave out the sweet candy to them in tiny paper bags with colored pictures of the god of happiness.

"Little boys and girls, come and have the old man's Happiness Candy!" he called out as streams of children and grown-ups passed by.

How tall and gaunt the temple looked, standing high above the many, many lantern lights.

Clang—clang—clang— The bell that hung under the great eaves was ringing all the time as a stream of people came up to worship before the temple. When my turn came, I pulled the long red and yellow rope to ring the bell. Then, throwing some coins in the big wooden box in front of me, I bowed and clapped my hands together in deep reverence, and came away satisfied.

Just as I came back to the temple gate, where the line of the lighted tent-shops began, I saw a group of children clustered together in front of a little tent.

"Kimi, let us go," I said, "and see what it is."

By the time we reached there, the children had all gone inside.

"Why!" I exclaimed, "it is the Paper Puppet Show!"

Suddenly an old man peeped out from behind the tent.

"Honorable young mistress, come in. The play is just beginning. We have a group of very good actors today."

"Kimi, I want to go in. Do hurry!" I cried, pulling Kimi by the sleeve. So she paid the few coins and we hustled in. There must have been only five or six children in that little tent, but it was packed.

How perfect the little stage was! The one slender candle cast such a real footlight. Each paper doll dressed in its costume was coming out before us. One was the elderly priest, and his voice certainly sounded old. Then there were two boy-priests, and their voices sounded just like real young people.

"*Maa! Maa!*" sighed Kimi. "Honorable young mistress, is he not clever? That old man is making all these actors' voices by himself."

It quite spoiled the play for me to have Kimi tell me that, for I almost thought the paper dolls were talking themselves.

The following story, "The Precious Poison," is this puppet show which Kimi and I enjoyed seeing so much.

THE PRECIOUS POISON

Once upon a time there lived an old priest in a small temple far from a village. He neither ate fish nor drank rice wine, but ate only vegetables. He usually sat by the bronze fire-brazier where the kettle was always sizzling ready for a refreshing tea. This kindly good priest had just one queer thing about him. Year in and year out, he had close beside him a small wooden box of "poison." Why he kept it there, no one knew—not even his two young disciples, whose names were Toji and Soji.

Whenever Toji and Soji dusted his room, the old priest would say, "This box of poison, I will attend to it myself. For if you touch it, it might poison you."

One afternoon the old priest clapped his hands and called the boy-priests.

"Now, my Toji and Soji, I am going on a priestly duty over the other side of the mountain.

While I am away, take care of my temple and be careful not even to come near the box of poison."

"We will not even come near it," said the two.

"And," went on the priest, "I will be back by sundown."

"We will await your return," said the two boy-priests, bowing their shaved heads to the matted floor.

They followed the priest to the entrance, and one handed him a little brass gong and a hammer, while the other handed him a bag for the donation of the rice. Then with a light gray hood over his head and straw sandals on his white-mittened feet, the priest was ready for his priestly duty.

As soon as the old priest was out of sight, the two boys looked at each other. Then they softly went into the priest's room. By the bronze brazier, the wooden poison box looked very small. This was the first chance they had to come so near it.

"What can a small box like that do?" said Soji, still sitting far from the wooden box.

"What can a small box like that do? *Nani!*



"WHAT IS THIS I SEE! AM I DREAMING?"

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That is nothing. I will go near," said Toji, sliding his knees nearer to it, but there he stopped.

"*Nani!* That is nothing. I will go near," said Soji, sliding on his knees to where Toji was sitting. Then he stopped and they looked at one another.

"Are you afraid to be any nearer?" asked Soji.

"I? *Nani!* That is nothing. I can go!" said Toji, as he slid very near to it. Soji was as anxious to see the contents of the poison box as Toji, but he was afraid to go any nearer. So he pushed Toji forward! And then he realized what he had done! For he had pushed him much harder than he intended, and Toji came down with a "*Ya!*" straight down on the box of poison. The next moment Toji lay there breathless.

"Am I dead?" he shouted very loud. Soji was too frightened to speak. At first he was sure Toji was dying, but seeing him trying to get up, he rushed to help him.

"Look. *Taihen!* Catastrophe!" cried Toji, half rising, seeing the poison box all smashed.

From the broken corners a white sand-like pile was gradually appearing.

"*Ya! Taihen! Catastrophe!* It is the poison," cried the other, running away. But Toji did not move. He looked still closer at the white sandy pile.

"Dumb you!" he shouted to the other, sticking his fingers in the pile of white sand. The next moment the white sandy fingers went into his mouth.

"Good it is!" he cried, continuing to lick the sand off his fingers.

"What are you doing?" asked Soji loudly, coming nearer to him. But Toji paid no attention. He continued to move his fingers from the white sand to his mouth, and from his mouth to the white sand, until the white sand pile was fast disappearing.

"You are eating the poison!" cried Soji, peering close down on him.

"Foolish you," said Toji; "it is sugar. The precious taste of sweet."

"*Ya!*" cried the other, falling on his knees beside the other, and he commenced moving his

fingers from the sugar pile to his mouth and from his mouth to the sugar pile. Very quickly every bit of the white sandy pile was gone.

When they had tasted all there was of the sugar, they looked at one another.

"It was good!" they said.

Then they looked troubled. "What will the old priest say!" they exclaimed. "Ah! Ah! We have eaten his precious 'poison'!"

"I have a good idea," said Toji. He got up and quickly went to the *tokonoma*, the little raised alcove. There, from the middle of the ceiling, a beautiful roll painting hung. He rushed up to it and pulled it down with a crash, and tore it into half.

"*Ya! Taihen! Catastrophe!*" cried Soji, running after him to try to stop him. But Toji did not pay any attention. This time he took up a beautiful vase and threw it against the polished pole of the *tokonoma*.

"*Pichan! Gala——gala——gala——!*"

Down went the vase on the matted floor, breaking into a thousand pieces. Just then they heard the "I have returned" call of the priest. But

neither of them went to the entrance to welcome back the old priest.

When the old priest entered his room, he saw two figures crouched on the matted floor, crying. His beautiful roll painting was lying on the floor, torn into two pieces, and his precious old flower-vase was broken into a thousand pieces.

"What is this I see! Am I dreaming?" exclaimed the old priest in dismay.

"O-o——, O-o——, merciful honored priest, forgive us!" cried Toji. "We have accidentally torn your prized painting and have broken your most prized flower-vase. For these wrongs we have only now taken all your precious poison. Oh, forgive us, honored priest! Forgive us before we die!"



IN SUMMER TIME, SITTING ON THE VERANDA BESIDE HONORABLE GRANDMOTHER WAS A LARK

JULY

In July, sitting on the veranda beside honorable Grandmother was a lark. The sliding doors were pushed back, and the bamboo roll screens were up, so we could look straight out on the sunny garden. I thought even the heat of the summer was bearable, looking at the salmon-colored goldfish darting in and out of the green water-weeds in the cool pond.

Then I heard the usual street sound: *Pee——pee——pee——!* It was the steam whistle of the tobacco-pipe mender, who was pulling along his wagon-store. *Pee——pee——pee——!* How drowsy it made me! And how much warmer it made me feel!

Then the shimmering water of the pond suddenly darkened, and the goldfish disappeared into the deep, and I heard the *goro, goro, goro-goro* of the distant thunder—what a soothing sound it was in contrast to the steam whistle!

"One, two, three——" I counted, as the big rain-drops began to fall on the dry stepping-stones.

"Honorable Grandmother," I cried, "there is going to be a shower! Then it will be cool!"

A refreshing wind dashed through the bamboo grove, making its leaves rustle—*gasa, gasa, gasa-gasa*. And soon after, the shower came down in earnest, making the pine-needles and every leaf in the garden glisten.

Kimi, the rosy-cheeked maid, went about busily, sliding the glass doors over the railing of the veranda, and I followed after her, trying to help. When all the doors were closed, the whole house settled into peaceful readiness for any storm without. I, too, sat on the summer cushion of woven reed, and together we watched the storm. The green lightning flashed through the glass doors, and the *goro, goro, goro-goro* of the thunder sounded loud and mighty. Pretty soon the rain commenced to pour with renewed force as the lightning and thunder died down for a while.

"*Maa!*" I cried. "It looks as if someone in the

heavens is pouring a big jug full of water right over our tile roof," I said.

"So I think." Honorable Grandmother smiled.

"It must be the 'Umbrella-Maker's Kozo,' with his jug full of rain!" I cried excitedly, remembering a story I had heard at school.

"Tell me about it," said Grandmother, her dark eyes lighting up. "Today, Chiyo will be the story-teller, and Grandmother will be the listener."

And so this is the story I told then, as I remembered from what I heard my teacher tell to our class one day.

THE UMBRELLA-MAKER'S KOZO

Once upon a time there lived an umbrella-maker with a little boy-helper whom he called "Kozo." They lived in a comfortable house which faced the main street of the village. Every morning they took away all the doors, and so the whole front of the house was open, and that made it seem as if the umbrella-maker was always ready to welcome a customer.

From the ceiling many umbrellas hung upside down, and on the matted floor below many unfinished umbrellas lay, some of them mere bamboo frames, some with oil papers pasted on, while others which were finished had been painted in yellow, or black with red rings in the middle.

The umbrella-maker always sat in midst of the umbrellas, and proudly showed his customers how good and quick he was at making umbrellas. There was a narrow space with a wooden floor at the back of the house. There,

on a soft cushion, Kozo sat, shaving the bamboo sticks, and boring holes in them to make the frames.

One beautiful summer day Kozo was carrying out many umbrellas into the yard to dry them, when a strong gust of wind blew one of them out into the field near by.

Kozo ran after it, jumping over the fence. He ran and ran, but the umbrella rolled and rolled across the field, and Kozo could not catch it. Just as he had jumped upon the umbrella's handle with a last desperate effort, a terrible wind blew the boy and the umbrella together into the sky.

It happened so quickly that Kozo did not know what was happening until he had flown high up into the sky.

How small his house looked, and how picture-like the village looked when he peeped down over his shoulder, hanging under the umbrella!

"Where am I going to?" cried Kozo to himself. "I am higher than the clouds!"

By and by the wind abated, and he was dropping gently toward a huge dark cloud. The huge

dark cloud looked so soft and fleecy that Kozo was not afraid to fall on it. It wouldn't hurt him.

"But that is a thunder-cloud, isn't it?" cried Kozo, suddenly remembering that whenever a huge dark cloud appeared, his master would gather up all the umbrellas in the yard, and carry them hurriedly into the house, and then he would offer incense to the family shrine, and pray that the thunder would not fall on his house.

"Wouldn't I meet Mr. Thunder if I should fall on that cloud?" Kozo exclaimed, frightened. But before he could do anything, he had fallen on the huge dark cloud.

Now, there was nothing Kozo could do but to fold his umbrella and walk on. Slipping over bumps and holes of the cloud, he walked on, but he did not make any noise, for the cloud was very soft and smooth.

Around a little hill, he suddenly came upon a queer little house with thatched roof, and a little window, and a little door. Kozo rushed to the house, glad that people lived even on a cloud. But when he peeped in through the bamboo lattice of the window, there sat an awful-looking

man with a pair of horns on his head, and long teeth that stuck out from between his lips.

This was Mr. Thunder's house! Kozo jumped to his feet to run, but Thunder was quick to see him.

"Young man!" he cried. "Don't run away, and don't be afraid. How did you come here?"

So Kozo stood, and told him all that had happened as bravely as he could. Thunder laughed, opening his mouth from ear to ear

"I was looking for a helper," Thunder said. "You work the rain for me. Come in."

So Kozo went in. In this little house, Thunder was sitting on the matted floor by a fire-pit cut in the floor, smoking a large brazen pipe. On the wall were small drums fixed around a large hoop.

"Let us go to work at once," said Thunder, putting on a waistband of tiger skin, and throwing off his clothes. He brought out a strange little jar, and handed it to Kozo.

"This is the magic jar of rain," Thunder explained. "It is always full of water, and no mat-

ter how much water you pour out of it, you can never empty it."

Then, giving him a bunch of bamboo twigs, he went on: "You soak these bamboo twigs in the jar, and swing them like this, and splash the water to the ground below. That will be the rain. And I will attend to the noise-making."

Thunder went out, carrying his large hoop of drums on his shoulders. Kozo followed him, holding the magic jar of rain and the bamboo twigs in his arms.

"Now begin!" cried Thunder, running across to the other edge of the cloud and beating on his drums, which made the terrible noise of the rolling thunder. Kozo ran after him, sprinkling the water from his magic jar.

What a good time they had! Thunder ran back and forth across the cloud, making that awful noise: *Goro! Goro! Goro! Gara! Gara! Gara!* Kozo followed close after him, splash-splashing the water from his magic jar. And what an amount of water showered from the magic jar!

Kozo could look down and see the whole vil-



KOZO COULD LOOK DOWN AND SEE THE WHOLE VILLAGE BATHED IN HIS RAIN. AND KOZO SAW THAT MANY PEOPLE WERE RUSHING INTO HIS MASTER'S SHOP TO BUY UMBRELLAS.

lage bathed in his rain. Dozens of people were running along the streets. Some were rushing into a near-by house for shelter. Many children were running home all dripping with rain. And Kozo saw that many people were rushing into his master's shop to buy umbrellas. In a few minutes, all the streets were dotted with the new umbrellas, yellow, black, and red, now moving slowly.

What fun it was to run around on the cloud, and to shower the rain! Kozo shouted in joy, and jumped and tumbled about the ledges of the cloud as Thunder rolled his terrible drums, leaping from ledge to ledge of the cloud.

When the work was over, both Thunder and Kozo were tired and wet, and it was growing dark already. Kozo was trudging along after Thunder, with the magic jar of rain in his arms, on their way to the cottage, when suddenly Kozo began to wonder what his master might be doing. He felt so homesick that he knelt down on the edge of the cloud, and looked down.

There his old home stood way, way down, its

roof now wet and shiny after the thunder-shower. But Kozo could not see his master.

"Oh, Master," Kozo whispered, "did you know that the rain was my work? Do you know I am right over your head now?"

Kozo leaned over the edge of the cloud to see his old home more closely. He leaned over so far that he slipped, and fell headlong to the ground.

What an awfully long fall it was to the ground! The air sang in his ears as he fell faster and faster. That back yard of his old home, which looked so small from the cloud, seemed to spread out as if it were an umbrella which somebody opened suddenly before his eyes.

A moment later, Kozo had crashed on his old master's back yard. The master came running out at this noise, and picked up his crying Kozo in his arms, repeating: "Where have you been? Where have you been?"

The magic jar of rain was broken in the fall, and so much water ran out of it that soon the whole village was flooded, and the umbrella-maker's house was washed away. But when the

umbrella-maker found that his dear Kozo had come back safely, he was so glad that he did not complain a word about his house being washed away. And Kozo was glad, too, that he came back to his old master, though they had no house to live in now.

AUGUST

“Summer-time is a happy time.” That is what my little American friends often sing to me now.

That is just the way I felt when I was little. It was because I could go out with honorable Grandmother for such pleasant long walks. It was one day, when honorable Grandmother and I were visiting our relatives in the country, that I accompanied her to the temple. On the way, we went through a narrow road where either side was thick with bamboo groves. And through the rustling, sharp green foliage, we heard the flutter of wings and chirping of songs.

*“Where is my sparrow?
Where is my sparrow?
Tell me the home
Where my sparrow lives,”*

sang my honorable grandmother very quietly.



THE OLD MAN HAD SUCH A HAPPY TIME WATCHING THE CHEERFUL
FLUTTER OF WINGS AND THE HEARTFELT ENTERTAINMENT BY HIS
DEAR PET SPARROW, HE DID NOT REALIZE THE TIME.

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And I joined her, singing:

*“Chu—Chu—Chu—
Chu—Chu—Chu—
This way it is. This way it is.
With tea and tiny cakes
We await your coming.”*

Then we both laughed, for that was a song in a story we both loved.

“*Maa!* It must have been a road just like this that the old man wandered through to find his sparrow!” I said.

“Oh, please, honorable Grandmother,” I begged, “tell me that story once more as we wander through this place. The temple is still far off yet.”

And so, as usual, my kind grandmother began to tell me, as we walked on slowly, the following story of the sparrow whose home was in a bamboo grove like the one we were wandering through.

THE SPARROW

Once upon a time there lived an old man and an old woman. The little hut of theirs never lacked gaiety, for the old man had one pet—a sparrow who chirped the whole day. As soon as the old man was up with the sun, he would give the sparrow grains of rice. When he returned at sundown, tired after a day of gathering brushwood, he never forgot to feed him.

One warm summer day the old man, as usual, went to the woods to gather the brushwood. The old woman was in the back yard, washing her clothes by the big wooden well.

Zabu, zabu, za-za-bu. The water made noises as she rubbed her clothes in the wooden tub. Near the tub was a blue rice-bowl full of paste for starching the clothes.

The sparrow came and watched her. The old woman was so busy with her washing, she did not

notice the little sparrow until she saw the empty bowl of starch.

"*Maa!*" she cried. "All my paste is gone!"

Then she looked around and saw the little sparrow. He was looking up at her troubled.

"I am sorry," the sparrow said to the old woman. "I thought it was for me. It was in the blue rice-bowl; I always have my rice in it."

"You bad sparrow!" cried the old woman in great wrath. "I ought to cut off your greedy little tongue for that. Now, fly away before I do anything rash!"

The little sparrow did not want to go, thinking of the kind old man. But the old woman cried again:

"Fly now. *Shee——!*"

So the sparrow, after making a little tilt of a bow of farewell, sorrowfully flew away.

That afternoon, as usual, the old man returned toward his little hut. On his back was a pile of dry branches. As he came near his low bamboo gate, he began to sing his usual song:

"Where is my sparrow?

Where is my sparrow?

*Tell me the home
Where my sparrow lives."*

Then the old man waited for the sparrow to chirp a song back to him. But not a sound was heard except the steady *swish-swash, swish-swash* of the old woman washing rice.

He slid the wooden lattice door open. It made a sharp *gala-gala* noise. The old woman, wiping her wet hands on her dark blue calico apron, came to meet him at the door.

"Old woman, old woman," said the old man, "how is my sparrow today?"

"Ah, that!" said the old woman coldly. "If you mean that greedy pet of yours, he ran away today."

And she told the old man what had happened, while the old man listened with a sorrowful bent head.

All that night he waited for the sparrow, but he did not come back. Finally on the third day, the old man started on a hunt to find his sparrow. He walked clear to the edge of the rice-field, and

there he went into the dark forest. As he trudged along, he sang in his usual quavering voice:

*"Where is my sparrow?
Where is my sparrow?
Tell me the home
Where my sparrow lives."*

Once in a while he cocked his ears and listened. But no answer came. Sometimes he heard the fluttering of some wings and the cheery chirpings of some sparrows, but he did not hear the song of his sparrow.

The old man passed through the dark forest; he climbed over a hill, crossed a deep valley, and finally he came into a bamboo grove. And yet he had not found his sparrow. The old man became discouraged, but he continued to walk on, singing his song. At last he found himself in a dense green of bamboos towering and swaying way above his head.

*"Where is my sparrow?
Where is my sparrow?
Tell me the home
Where my sparrow lives."*

Then suddenly he heard clearly——

*“Chu—Chu—Chu—
Chu—Chu—Chu—
This way it is. This way it is.
With tea and tiny cakes
We await your coming.”*

A moment later, his little sparrow was bowing before him.

“Yare! Yare!” sighed the old man, wiping his damp brow with his long blue kerchief. “This old man is blessed to find you again.”

“Honorable Jii-Sama, welcome to our humble home. Come this way,” the sparrow said, leading the old man further into the bamboo grove. They came in front of a little rustic house. The father sparrow and the mother sparrow came out to greet him. They were so glad to meet the old man who had been very kind to their son.

They helped the old man take off his straw sandals, and took him into the spacious matted room. The old man was given a huge red silk cushion to sit on. Then the sparrows took turns bringing him sweet cakes and most delicious tiny nuts

on black lacquer stands, while the father sparrow sat before the old man, pouring him a cup of fragrant tea.

After a while two little sparrows came in to give a sparrow dance in honor of the old man. They were dressed in bright green bamboo-striped kimonos with red sashes. The old man had such a happy time, watching the cheerful flutter of the little wings and enjoying the heartfelt entertainment of his dear pet sparrow, he did not realize the time. But when he saw the very long shadows the bamboo made on the soft matted floor, he knew he must go. So he lingeringly made known his wish to go home.

"This is indeed an honor," said the father sparrow. "We cannot thank you enough for your kindness to our son. If you must return, we cannot keep you. But please wait a few moments."

The father sparrow flapped his wings three times. Immediately several sparrows appeared, bringing in two black basket-boxes. One was large and one was small.

"Please take either of these in token of your visit with us," said the father sparrow, bowing.

"It is indeed kind of you to give me a present after such nice entertainment. Then let me have the small one. That will be lighter on this old shoulder of mine," the old man said smiling. Then, bidding the sparrows farewell, he trudged his way homeward.

"Old man, old man," said the old woman when she saw him, "where have you been all this day? And what is that handsome basket-box on your shoulder?"

"Old woman, old woman, wait till I take my sandals off. Then I will tell you."

But no sooner he let down the basket-box on the matted floor than the greedy old woman hurried to open it.

"*Taihen!*" she exclaimed. "Look, old man!"

When the old man looked, he was astonished too. There were gold coins, rolls of silk, gold tea-cups, and flowers made of coral.

"Please hurry, old man," said the old woman, getting much excited, "and tell me all about what you did this afternoon."

So the old man told the old woman all that had

happened. He told about the entertainment, and how after all they had done, they gave him choice of the large and small basket-box.

"And, old man, old man, how foolish you were not to take the larger one!" the woman said disagreeably. Then she asked him in minute detail the way to the sparrow's home. A little while after, she was slipping into her light wooden clogs.

"Old woman, old woman, where are you going?"

"I am going to see our pet sparrow and apologize for my meanness," the old woman answered.

"Then wait till another sunrise."

But the old woman made a bow of "I go now" and breathlessly hurried toward the bamboo grove. When finally she found her way to the dense greens of bamboos, loudly she sang:

*"Where is my sparrow?
Where is my sparrow?
Tell me the home
Where my sparrow lives."*

Then immediately she heard the chirping song:

*“Chu—Chu—Chu—
Chu—Chu—Chu—
This way it is. This way it is.
With tea and tiny cakes
We await your coming.”*

A moment later the little sparrow was bowing before her.

When the sparrow saw the old woman, he was afraid. But the old woman beamed upon him and said, “I came to make my amends. I am sorry for the way I scolded you.”

So the little sparrow said, “Honorable Baa-Sama, welcome to our humble home. Come this way.”

And he led her further into the bamboo grove. When they reached the little rustic house, and when the father sparrow and the mother sparrow came out to greet her, she said, “I am sorry I made your little sparrow run away like that. I scolded him too much.”

The sparrows were pleased to hear her speak

in such a gentle manner, so they asked the old woman to come in. But she said it was too late in the evening. Yet the old woman would not go; she lingered there for some time. Finally she said, "Since I cannot come in, will you let me see one of your basket-boxes here?"

When the sparrows heard this greedy plea, they knew she was still the same selfish old woman. But the father sparrow flapped his wings three times and the servant sparrows brought in two basket-boxes. One was large and one was small.

The old woman eagerly shouldered the large basket-box and departed, while the gentle sparrows gazed after her in amazement. It was a very heavy basket-box. But when the old woman thought how many beautiful things there would be in that box, she did not mind the weight.

She walked briskly and soon was out of the bamboo grove. She crossed the valley; she climbed over the hill; she went through the dark forest; and finally, when she came to the rice-field, she became so anxious to see what was in the basket-box that she stopped. Then, from her

shoulder, she let the large basket-box down on the road, and looked around. Nobody was in sight, but it was getting dark. The field of rice was dim in the twilight. The old woman untied the purple cord that held the lid. Then hastily lifting the lid, she peeped in.

What a sight! She was too frightened even to scream. There popped out two monsters. One had a head that had only one eye and a big gaping mouth. The other monster had a long, snake-like neck with three bulging eyes; its long red tongue was swinging out of its mouth like a flame of fire. The monsters in terrible voice moaned:

“You greedy old woman! You greedy old woman!”

By this time the old woman was on her feet. With all the strength that was left in her old self, she ran and ran to her old home. She pushed the lattice door open, ran into the quiet house stumbling, and bowed deeply before the startled old man.

Then from the beginning she told him all that had happened.

"*Maa! Maa!*" said the old woman, taking a long breath. "Very truly, I did have a most frightful time."

"*Yare! Yare!* You must have," said the old man, looking down gently on the old woman. "But old woman, old woman, that kind of thing happened to you because you have been so greedy and unkind."

"Old man, old man, at last I see that I was wicked. From now on I will be kind to all sparrows and all people in the world."

Since then many sparrows journeyed to their home and partook of the rice paste which the old man bought with his gold coins. So the old man and the old woman sang together a new song:

*"From your happy home,
In the bamboo grove,
Come! Come! Come to see
Your second happy home."*

SEPTEMBER

September! That is the most beautiful time of the year in Japan to me. I thought so particularly when we wandered into the country and saw the brilliant scarlet leaves darting among the gold of the ginko trees.

Schoolgirls on excursion passed by us. They were all talking and laughing as they walked briskly in line, two by two. How I envied them then! I was too little to venture on such a long pilgrimage. They were on their way to a famous temple; so Grandmother told me from what she gathered from the conversations of the teachers who were walking with the girls.

"Honorable Grandmother," I said, "which season of the year makes you think of brave warriors?"

"What makes you ask such a question?" she asked in mild surprise.

"Why, are not many of the famous temples dedicated to brave warriors?"

"Yes, sometimes. But why the season, little Chiyo?" she said kindly, with a light in her dark eyes.

"Because," I said, "I learned at school that the cherry blossom is like a brave warrior. It blooms beautifully only for a short while and falls unfaded like the warrior who dies in a field of battle, still young and brave. It is spring when the cherry blossom blooms. But, honorable Grandmother, do you not think autumn is like a brave warrior, too, in another way?"

Grandmother gave me an approving quiet smile and nodded her head.

"I think so, too," she said slowly. "It is the vigor of the scarlet maple in the crisp autumn that reminds me of the armor interwoven with strong scarlet cords. And the yellow foliage reminds me of the gold of the helmet."

"*Maa!*" I exclaimed. "Do you think so, too! That is just what I think!"

"I will tell you a story of old Tameyoshi," said honorable Grandmother. "There is much sad-

ness in warriors' lives, though there is also the gaiety in their lives like the cherry blossom's."

And the following is the story she told me one day in autumn—the same season in which Tameyoshi fought his sad battle.



ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE, THE FATHER FORGOT THAT HE WAS
FIGHTING AGAINST HIS ELDEST SON. HIS ELDEST SON FORGOT THAT
HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST HIS FATHER AND BROTHERS.

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THE OLD WARRIOR TAMEYOSHI

The old warrior Tameyoshi was a famous soldier. He had fought in so many wars for the sake of the Emperor, and killed so many bandits that the Emperor told him to kill, that everybody in the country called him "the bravest."

But as years went by, he grew old, and at last he retired into his country home, saying that he would let younger men take his place.

Then the Emperor died, and there was a question of who should come to the throne, because there were two princes who wanted to become Emperor. And the two princes decided to fight it out on the field of battle. That was a sad way for deciding a question, but that was the way of the old.

One of the princes sent a messenger to Tameyoshi, asking the old warrior to command his army. Tameyoshi declined, saying that he was too old. The Prince sent him many messengers,

one after another, but each time Tameyoshi said, "I humbly beg to be excused from this too high an honor."

His chief reason was that his eldest son had run away to join the other prince, though people did not know of it then, and he did not want to face him as an enemy.

At last the Prince sent his chief councilor to make a last appeal to Tameyoshi.

"You are the only man in this country," said the councilor, "who can possibly make the coming war successful to my prince. If you say 'no' again, my prince will come himself to plead before you."

At this, the old warrior Tameyoshi broke down, and bowed his head to the floor.

"Yes, my lord," he said with tears in his eyes, "I will offer up my body and soul to my prince. I will bring all my sons who still stay with me; I will bring all my followers, and fight a fight of my life. It is an honor for a soldier to be so esteemed by so high a person as my prince."

Thus he became the commander of the Prince's army in the great war to decide who should be

the emperor of the country. But he was never proud of himself, nor was he glad at all. He was always thinking of his eldest son, who had run away to the other side. He was his enemy now, but a father would love his son whatever the son might do. So Tameyoshi decided to send him an armor called "*Hizamaru*," or "The Good Armor of the Knee," which was one of the heirlooms of his family. It was a famous old armor made of small steel plates tied together with the knee-skin of a thousand bulls. So the whole armor was light and flexible, to give freedom to the man who wore it, but it was strong, and no arrow nor sword was known to have pierced it. The steel plates were all lacquered in plain black, but the last plates of the great sleeves and those of the skirts were edged with gold, in the shape of stormy clouds with dragons' heads between.

Tameyoshi fasted and purified himself, as was the family custom, before taking it out of the sealed armor chest, in reverent respect to his ancestors who had worn it in all the great battles. This precious armor Tameyoshi should have worn in the coming war, but he sent it away to

his prodigal son, because the loving father knew that the coming war would be the last war for either himself or for his son.

The prodigal son wept when he received this precious armor. He found what a love his father still held toward him. But he had been tied by oath to his prince, and however he regretted, it was now his duty to fight against his father and his younger brothers.

When both armies were ready, they met on the field of battle. The old warrior marched at the head of his army with four of his younger sons. On the field of battle the father forgot that he was fighting against his eldest son. His eldest son forgot that he was fighting against his father and brothers. They were all soldiers of their princes, and fought as bravely as they could.

But as fortune would have it, when evening came after a long day of fighting, Tameyoshi found his army beaten, and he was forced to retreat with his sons and a handful of soldiers that remained.

Late at night, after a long march, they reached the seashore, where they thought they would find

a boat to escape to the far-away East, and there they would raise an army to try their luck once more.

But suddenly, from the dark, the pursuers appeared, shooting a hail of arrows upon them. The little band of soldiers fought for their lives under the command of the brave old Tameyoshi, and scattered the pursuers in every direction. But when the enemy was gone, Tameyoshi found that all his followers were killed except his young sons. With a sorrowful voice Tameyoshi called his sons around him.

"My sons," he said, "now the time has come for you to see the last of your father. Now, listen; the reason why I put this armor on my old, withered body was not to seek fame for myself. I fought only for the sake of my prince, who was so good as to choose me out of all the soldiers of the country. I have given my best, and I have lost. This is the lot of a soldier. I have nothing more to say about it. Now I am going to surrender. My sons must each find himself a hiding-place, and wait till the new emperor sends out

a proclamation of pardon for all my sons. I will plead and offer my life to save you all."

His sons were shocked at their father's sad words.

"You shall never surrender," cried one of them.

"I will fight and fight as long as there is life in me!" cried another. "And bring you safely to the East, where you shall command an army again."

"No," answered the father sadly. "When the luck of war is against us, we cannot make our way as we could when the luck is with us. I will surrender."

When his brave sons cried again that they would first die before giving up their father, Tameyoshi spoke still more sadly.

"You have not seen that I am wounded," he said. "I cannot fly with you. You must not think that in this old age I submit to this shame of surrender, seeking my own safety! I will offer my life, and plead for the lives of my sons, for you must live, and preserve the line of our family. That is the duty we all owe our ancestors. There is my eldest son with the new emperor. He will help me win my plea."

A hushed silence followed.

There was nothing now for the sons to say. The father continued:

"I had hoped that if I should win this war, our prince would reward my sons with fair estate and promotions in the court. This hope now denied, I will at least save your lives."

His sons wept till their armor sleeves were wet, and prayed that Heaven might forgive their sins in leaving their father to the hands of their enemy.

Too soon the morning came. When the early dawn broke the darkness in the eastern sky, the sons said their last farewell, and turned to go. When they had gone a few steps, Father Tame-yoshi called them back.

"What is it, Father?"

All the young men rushed back at this unexpected call.

"No," replied the aged father, "I have nothing more to say. I wished only to see your faces in this morning light."

So hard it is for the father to part with his sons;

before he knew, the sun was high and his sons were forced to take their final leave.

The old warrior Tameyoshi surrendered, and the now victorious general, his eldest son, received him in his camp, filled with emotions of both joy and sorrow. He had come through the fiercest of battles with not a scratch, because he wore the wonderful armor which his father had sent him. Also he believed, with many of his followers, that the magical virtue of the armor had much to do in giving him victory in the war. He had been liberally rewarded for his service by the Emperor, and now he was the only general under the Emperor, but his joy was dim like a candle-light in the great gloom that filled his heart, for before him now was his aged father, defeated and broken, pleading for the lives of his younger brothers.

The young general bowed deeply before his father, who readily forgave the prodigal son. And together in all humility, they pleaded for the lives of his younger brothers, who were still in their hidings.

The Emperor took pity on this sad family.

And so, though Tameyoshi soon died in his captivity, his sons were saved and pardoned. And from them came a long line of a prosperous family called Minamoto, which flourished even to the very recent times.

OCTOBER

Certain days in the month of October, when the sun does not come out of the clouds entirely, and the evenings end with rain, I always think of this story called "The Bear and the Leak."

How well I remember my hating to go, one day, to my harp lesson on my way from school. I was carrying several books wrapped in a cloth of scarlet in one hand, and my umbrella in the other. I hoped earnestly it would pour rain, so I could have a good excuse to go home. But the rain continued only in drops on my red oil-paper umbrella. Finally I came to the corner leading to my harp teacher's house. So I had to go.

At the entrance of the teacher's simple pretty house, I paused for a second. The harp strings gave out such a clear melody, mixed with the sound of the rain dripping gently on the stepping-stones like a quiet accompaniment.

Gently I slid the lattice door open. I saw two

pairs of clogs. "So," I thought to myself, "I shall have to wait my turn!" When I came to the pupils' room, there was a young lady sitting near the fire-box, waiting for her lesson. She put aside her magazine, and returned my bow.

"It must have been quite chilly without. Will you not warm your hands?" she said kindly. So I bowed and put my hands on the edge of the fire-box to warm them a few minutes. The red charcoal looked cheerful as I peeped down on them. Just then the sliding door opened and a girl came out from the teacher's room.

"Excuse to leave before you," she said to us both, as she left the room, and the kindly young lady in turn said to me, "Excuse. I will go before you." And then she disappeared in to the teacher's room. Soon I heard the melody of the harp strings. And how well she played!

"Ah! Ah!" I sighed to myself. "When will I ever play like that!"

Yet I heard *tap, tap, tap-tap*, the sound of the tapping of the honored teacher's hand. That meant she was not pleased.

"*Maa!*" I thought to myself. "She truly will

be irritated with me. I do not know my lesson half as well."

It was in this mournful mood that I was sitting, staring out into the tiny, wet garden, when I noticed a blue bowl right in the middle of the polished veranda.

"I wonder what it is doing there?" I questioned myself, when I heard the *potan*——*potan*——*potan* sound of heavy drops. Looking above the bowl, I saw a crystal-like drop coming straight down into the bowl. It was a rain-drop! Looking clear up to the ceiling, I saw a leak!

Suddenly I began to laugh. A leak in the dignified honored teacher's house! It made me think of a story. While I was still thinking about the story, I realized it was my turn for the lesson. How surprised I was, as I sat on the brown silk cushion, to see my usually serious-looking teacher smiling at me.

"Did something nice happen to you?" she said.

Then I realized I was still smiling, thinking of the story. I hesitated whether to tell her the story or not, but I did. And I am glad. For ever since,

my honored teacher and I have been good friends, and I did not mind the harp lessons after that at all. And so I will tell you the story of "The Bear and the Leak," which I told to my honored harp teacher on that day.

THE BEAR AND THE LEAK

One cold dreary night when the quiet rain was falling noiselessly on the fallen leaves, and the chilly wind was moaning through the pine branches, a huge bear was seen crawling to a lonely house far from the village.

Noiselessly the bear pushed through a hedge of thick brush, and then trampling over a beautiful bed of chrysanthemums, there he found himself in front of the house.

It must once have been a rich farmer's house, for its gable was high, and the thatched roof was thick—at least two feet thick. But because of long years of neglect, the black ropes which had been tied around the gable in many figures had rotted to pieces, and the eaves which once were cut in beautiful even lines had rotted and sagged down in many places. But the bear was not concerned with the oldness of the house now. He walked straight up to the house and sniffed.

There surely were some people in it. He put his nose into the wide gap between the wooden doors which had been warped so badly that they were not much of doors any more. But the woman of the house had closed them, just to show that she would not neglect any of her housewifely duties even in poverty. Inside the wooden doors was a wide space without floor where many rice bales had been piled up neatly in the shape of a pyramid, and around it were many straw matts, baskets, and hoes. But the bear was not interested in these things at all.

On the other side was a room with shabby paper doors, and the bear could see the shapes of a man and a woman through a tear in the paper door. The woman was blowing on the charcoal fire, which was glowing nice and red. And on the wall, there hung a long hunter's gun.

"I suppose I had better wait," said the bear to himself, "till they go to sleep, for the man might shoot me with that gun if I go in now."

The bear walked off, nodding to himself.

"I am glad, though, they are young, because I always love to eat young people."

The bear looked around and, seeing an old leaning stable, crawled into it, and waited. The man and woman's voices talking in the house could be heard through the quiet night.

"Is it not a dreadful night?" the woman was saying. "I am afraid this is the kind of night that a bear comes out to eat people."

"No," the man answered; "I am not afraid of bears. In these days the bears are not so fierce as they used to be. There is a still more horrid thing to think about when we live in an old house like this."

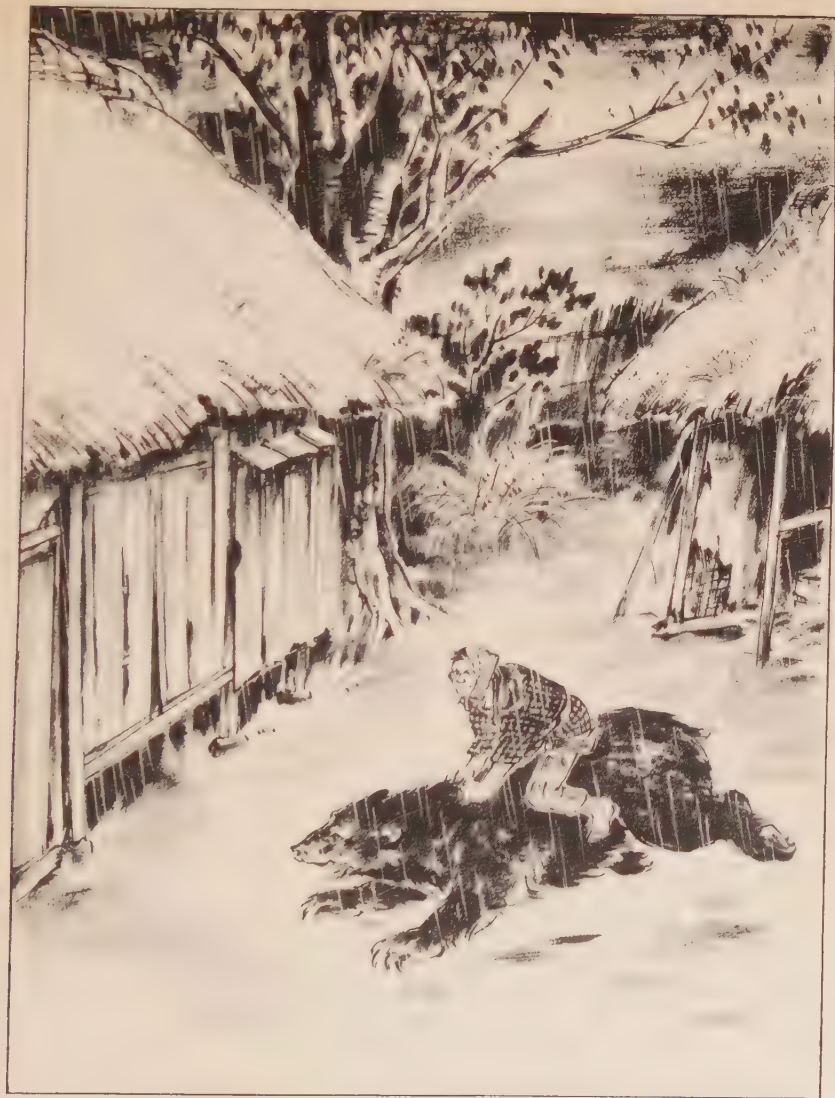
"What is that?" the woman asked.

"Why, the leak," said the man. "On a rainy night like this, I am worried about the leaks in the roof more than a bear breaking into the house."

The bear, listening in the stable, wondered what that "leak" was, for, being a bear, he did not understand the language of man very well.

"That is true," the woman said earnestly.

The man went on: "Do you remember that very bad night when our neighbor, Gonzo, the hunter, was with us? The leak was so terrible



"WAA!" CRIED THE BEAR. "THIS IS THE 'LEAK'. I AM LOST!" AND HE BEGAN TO RUN FOR HIS LIFE.

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that night, Gonzo stayed up all night, trying to stop it. But he could not."

The bear listened, wondering what kind of a beast that "leak" might be. It must be a fierce beast to keep a hunter awake all through the night. The bear became a little frightened to be in the dark stable by himself.

"Do you think there will be a leak again to-night?" the bear heard the woman asking her husband.

"It is coming pretty soon, I am sure," answered the man. Then with a sudden emotion, he added: "Ah, Wife, I would not mind fighting a dozen bears if I could put you in a house which has no leak."

"What!" exclaimed the bear in the stable. "Is a 'leak' a dozen times stronger than a bear?"

The bear scratched his head with his big paw, and imagined to himself what that "leak" would look like, and what might happen if he should meet the "leak" that night. The more he thought about it, the more frightened he became. He crouched down in a corner of the stable, and shivered.

“What shall I do?” the bear said to himself. “Shall I go home? Or shall I break in and eat the people before the ‘leak’ comes? What shall I do? What shall I do? Oh, I am hungry, but I am afraid.”

Just then came excited voices from the house.

“It is coming!”

“Where?”

“On the ceiling! Listen!”

“Get a pail!”

The bear did not wait to hear the last words. He was already running out of the stable, bound for his cave in the forest. Just then a strange dark thing appeared from nowhere, and jumped on the bear’s back.

“*Waa!*” growled the bear. “This is the ‘leak.’ I am lost!” And he began to run for his life.

The fact was that a horse-thief was just coming to the stable, and seeing a four-legged animal crawl out, thought it was a horse, and jumped on its back to run away with it. The thief was frightened to hear the growl, for he had never known a horse to growl like that.

“*Gaa!*” growled the bear again, jumping over

the chrysanthemums, and breaking through the hedge, but he could not shake the rider from his back. More frightened than the bear was the horse-thief. He held on to the deep fur of the bear's back with all his might, and could not even utter a cry. As he clung more tightly to the bear's back, the more frightened the bear became. The more frightened the bear became, the faster he ran. The faster he ran, the more tightly the horse-thief clung to the bear's back. And so at last they were running along like a cannon-ball, and before they knew it, they were running through the great forest.

Gasa-gasa-gasa! the brush rustled as if a storm were passing through the forest.

"Kya! kya! kya!" cried a monkey baby in his cradle high up in a tree.

Bata-bata-bata! A strong fluttering was heard, and a big pheasant started from the thicket. A fox ran out, a badger ran out, an owl howled in a tree, and a rabbit skipped off the path of the running bear. The whole forest was roused by the sudden appearance of the bear and the horse-thief.

"*Whoo-oo!*" called the brave wolf. "What is the matter?"

"*Gaa! Gaa! Help! Help!*" cried the bear. "The 'leak'!"

But even the brave wolf could do nothing when the bear was running away so fast.

"What is the 'leak' going to do with me?" the bear was thinking as he ran. And he kept on running all through the night.

Just where he had been to, and just how he came back, even the bear himself could not tell, but when the first ray of the morning sun broke over the eastern hills, bringing a bright clear day, the bear found himself running back to the farmhouse where he had picked up the "leak" the night before. He was so tired by this time, he did not know where he was going. He tore through the hedge and the chrysanthemum bed, and suddenly found that he was in a closed yard.

He had no time to turn. Tired though he was, he was still frightened. He ran up a tree like a cat, and made a somersault over the fence to the other side. In this extraordinary feat, the horse-thief was at last shaken off, and was left rolling

in the yard in front of the stable. And the bear ran away to his cave in the forest, panting and tottering as if he were ready to pass out any minute.

Since that day a bear has never come to look for his food in a house in Japan, for he has learned that all the houses in Japan are haunted, especially on a cold rainy night, by a thing more horrid than a bear, which people call the "leak."

NOVEMBER

The month of November seemed to me the bleakest month of the year. The scarlet maples had fallen, leaving the forest bare except for the evergreen pines that loomed gloomily above the rest of the trees. The wind howled outside, and the clear-cut *kalakon*——*kalakon*——sound of wooden clogs clicked on the frosty road, and when the darkness gathered, far and lonely came the sound of the bamboo whistle of the blind massage-man as he came by.

“*Anma!* Massage-man. Do you not want a massage?” he called between his piercing whistles.

On such a night nothing was more comfortable than to sit within the warm room of my honorable Grandmother.

How clearly I see now the bronze fire-box with the burning red charcoal! Honorable Grandmother sat very near it. The teakettle was always boiling, and she used to give me a cup of delicate

green tea. And if I was very good, she would give me a taste of the delicious cake which was part of her offering to the lighted shrine.

"Tonight is so cold and the wind is howling so, it must be very uncomfortable to be out. It is best to be in a home on a night like this, Chiyo," I can hear honored Grandmother say, as she fanned out the lighted candle with her graceful old hand.

"And on such a night," I would put in, "do not the ghosts come out?" Then I would go on pleading, "Honorable Grandmother, do tell me a scary story. It is just the kind of a night I would like to be frightened."

I can hear Mother and Kimi chuckling at this remark of mine, in the next room. Through the opened paper doors, I could see my kind Mother sewing on bright-patterned goods. That was to be a new kimono of mine to be worn at New Year's time.

"A scary story!" Grandmother would laugh softly. "I could tell you one. But would you not

like to hear that in the daytime? Tonight you may have a nightmare."

"*O! Iye!* No! Please tell me," I would say.

So after smoothing back her oiled hair with the tiny black comb, she would begin——

UMAKICHI

Once upon a time a woodcutter named Umaki was hurrying home, leading his pack-horse by way of the mountain path. On the horse's back was a huge pile of mammoth white radishes.

"*Ya!*" exclaimed the woodcutter to himself, seeing the setting-sun flicker its last rays into the woods. Everywhere around him seemed to become gloomy and cold.

"It is getting dark. What a chilly evening!" he said, wrapping tighter the long blue kerchief about his cheeks, and drawing in the leading-rope closer under his folded arms.

He wondered if on such an evening as this the mountain-witch would appear. He had never seen a witch, but he had heard of travelers lost in these woods who never were found afterwards. And it was said of these poor men that the fearful mountain-witch had caught them.

"*Hyu——hyu——*" moaned the wind as it whistled through the pines. Umakichi shivered. The more he thought about the witch, the more frightened he became. He quickened his steps and jerked the leading-rope, and the man and the horse started on a fast journey. In silence they went through the stumpy path. Umakichi did not sing his usual home-going song as he trod homeward. When they came to the middle of the mountain, the woods became very dark.

Suddenly, from somewhere behind, he heard a shrill voice call, "Umakichi! Umakichi!"

Umakichi felt as if trickles of icy water had been dropped down his hot neck. He did not turn around. Neither did he look to the left nor to the right, but tried to go faster. Hard though he tried to go, his feet did not seem to move. Under his breath, he kept praying, "Ah! Merciful Buddha, please save your poor servant. Ah! Merciful Buddha, please save your poor servant."

Then again the voice cried, "Umakichi! Umakichi!"

This time it sounded so close to his ear that the woodcutter had to turn around. Not three feet

away stood the mountain-witch in her tattered old kimono. Her streaming gray hair fell about her shoulders, and between her parted hair, her fierce old face stared down upon him. Her mouth was so wide, it almost reached her ears, as she said, holding out her bony hand:

“Umakichi! Give me a radish.”

Umakichi was too frightened to speak. Trembling, he unfastened the rope and pulled out a mammoth white radish from the pile, and handed it to her. She jerked it from him and quick as a flash pushed the huge, long white radish straight into her wide mouth, and gobbled it down. Then she stretched out her big bony hand, crying out shrilly:

“Umakichi, give me another radish.”

Again he handed her one, and again she gobbled the huge radish with its stem and leaves. So she kept on eating one after the other until the whole pile of his precious one hundred mammoth radishes was fast disappearing. By this time evening had completely turned into night. And Umakichi was hopelessly wondering if he had any chance of running away.

When the old witch had finished all the mammoth radishes, she cried out, "Now, Umakichi, give me your horse!"

Terrified, Umakichi handed her the leading-rope, and as she was fidgeting with it, in that second, Umakichi turned and ran for his life. He ran and ran, not realizing where he was going. Finally he came to a stop and took a long breath. Then as he rested and looked about him, he found he had come further into the mountain woods, instead of going to the edge of the slope which led to the village.

It was late, and the woodcutter was tired. He saw a house not far off, standing in clear relief against the dark blue sky. He walked to it and called out:

"Pardon me!"

No sound came from within. Then he called out again:

"Excuse to enter. I am a tired woodcutter looking for rest."

But no one answered him. He finally pushed the sliding doors open, saying to himself, "If I wander about here too long, the mountain-witch

will soon catch me. Within is safer than without."

So saying, he slipped off his straw sandals and entered into the dark house. It was bare, with not a thing to remind one of a living being. The matted floor was covered with dust, the paper doors were torn to pieces and the cobwebs stretched from corner to corner over the plaster walls.

"It is an empty house. Nevertheless, I am glad to rest my weary head," he muttered aloud to himself, trying to make some sound in the too silent house. He saw a crude stairway, so he climbed upstairs. For a long while he lay there on the dusty cold floor, thinking what a frightful time he had. He heard from a far distance the chime of the temple bell—*boom*——*boom*——sounding the "hour of the ox" of midnight.

"*Ya!*" he exclaimed. "It is already midnight. I wish I could sleep."

He finally loosened himself and was feeling drowsy, when he heard *gatan*——*gatan*——the sound of the wooden doors opening.

"*Ya!*" Umakichi whispered to himself. "Strange! Who can it be?"

Noiselessly he crawled on the matted floor to the wooden stairway, and looked down. The moonlight was streaming through the opened door. Like a clear picture, he caught sight of the old witch coming into the house.

"Ah! Ah!" the woodcutter moaned to himself. "Merciful Buddha! Please save your poor humble servant!" he prayed.

Then he heard the old witch stumbling about downstairs. Pretty soon he heard her yawning sleepily.

"*Maa! Maa!* The radishes were good. The horse was good, too. But, *iya*——*iya*——pity, I could not catch the woodcutter. Well—I think I will sleep now—I wonder, shall I sleep upstairs?" she asked herself aloud.

Umakichi shivered. He thought. "She must know I am up here."

"Or——" she went on, "shall I sleep in the big wooden rice-pounder? *Iya*——*iya*——I think I will sleep in the big rice-boiler. That is warm and safe."

Umakichi gave a sigh of relief. He heard her open the heavy lid of the rice-boiler. Then soon

after, he heard the lid closing with a thump over the boiler. Umakichi waited until he heard her snoring. Good! Old witch was asleep.

He softly went down the wooden stairs, past the entrance room into the yard. He found several huge stones lying near the root of an old pine tree. With a grunt and a long breath he finally rolled one of the big stones to the open entrance door. Then with much strength he caught it over his shoulder and carried it unsteadily into the kitchen. Quickly and noiselessly he placed the heavy stone on top of the boiler lid. Then he went out and gathered an armful of dry branches. These he brought back and began thrusting in the hearth, under the boiler. The long branches, he broke under his foot, making cheery noises—*pichi——pichi——pichi*.

Suddenly he heard someone singing. It was the witch inside the boiler! Umakichi jumped to his feet in terror. But all he heard was this:

*"Insects are singing gaily,
'Pichi—pichi—pichi!'
Life in the quiet dawn,*

*Too lonely it'll be
But for the friendly singing,
'Pichi—pichi—pichi!'* ”

Umakichi was astounded! A terrible demon could sing a song like that! The old witch must have thought the noise of the dry branches he was breaking to burn her up, were the noises of the singing insects! Suddenly Umakichi felt sorry for her. There came to him, then, an old saying of the Merciful Buddha: “Even a demon can be saved through the virtue of a forgiving heart.” Not waiting another second, he dropped all the dry branches, and walked out into the dark.

As he walked on, he kept praying, “Merciful Buddha, save the wicked one! For even this horrible one can make a pleasant song. Save the wicked one!”

When he looked back, the woods appeared peaceful. There was no one shrieking his name wildly through the whistling pine trees—“Umakichi!”

So with a feeling of great relief, he went on. The black woods became lighter and lighter, and



QUICK AS A FLASH SHE GOBBLED THE HUGE LONG WHITE RADISH
STRAIGHT INTO HER WIDE MOUTH.

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soon he saw the edge of the slope appear ahead of him. How thankful he was! He turned once more toward the dark woods and made a deep bow of gratitude to the Merciful Buddha. Then he made his way peacefully toward the squares of rice-fields and the thatched roofs, his village.

Ever since that dawn when he prayed for the salvation of the wicked one, no traveler or woodcutter has ever been troubled by a mountain-witch. Even the very old and the very young can go through the mountain in safety now.

And it is said, however much the mammoth radishes grow in that part of the country, no woodcutter will ever have a mammoth white radish growing in his farm.

DECEMBER

It seems but yesterday, yet many years have passed since my dear honorable Grandmother was with us. I can see her now, sitting before the long fire-box with the steam rising from the teakettle, and a small teacup beside her purple cushion, waiting for me. She always had special sweet things for me upon my return from school. I, after bowing my usual "I have returned, honorable Grandmother," always sat beside her, putting my small cold hands beside her delicate, slender fingers on the edge of the fire-box.

I remember one day particularly. It was a day or two before the New Year, when everybody was busy preparing for the glad day, for in Japan, the most important day in the year is New Year's day—like the happy Christmas here. Our whole household was so busy cutting up the cakes of rice paste, and taking out dishes and lacquer trays for the celebration, that no one paid much

attention to me, in spite of the fact it was the last day of school before the winter holidays. So, more than usual, I found great comfort in the welcome company of my honored Grandmother.

It was then that she made for me the bean-bags out of pretty red and purple crêpe silks, which every Japanese girl loves to play with. We play with them as American girls play with the balls. We juggle with them, and as we twirl them up in the air, two, three, or four at a time, we sing rhythmic songs.

Honored Grandmother made small bags for me so I could manage them easily in my little hands. When the pretty bags were ready for the beans, I put them in myself and then Grandmother sewed the open parts. What more did a girl need at New Year's time besides pretty bean-bags, battledore and shuttlecock, and poem cards?

Outside, in the back garden, our old gardener was very busy preparing for us the best and the most beautiful pine branches and bamboo. They were to be the congratulatory decoration on either side of our gate-posts to welcome the good-luck New Year. It is a refreshing sight to see

those greens, with the bright red and white of our flag fluttering in front of every home. The pine is the emblem of sameness and eternity, for it is ever green throughout the year, and the bamboo is the emblem of strength of character, for a bamboo will bend, but it will never break.

As we watched the old gardener slashing down the bamboo with his knife, the snowflakes began to fall on his back and to play around the pine branches and the small stone lantern. And as honored Grandmother smoothed back her glossy hair with her narrow comb, she said quietly, "This is just the kind of a day to tell you the story of 'The Old Couple of the Humble Hut.' And this will be the *O-Hanashi Osame*, the fulfillment of story-telling for this year; in the New Year, you will be one year older, and you will be able to read all the fairy-tales yourself, and will not need anyone to tell you the stories. So I will tell you this last one before the New Year comes."



I SAT BESIDE HER, PUTTING MY SMALL COLD HAND BESIDE HER
DELICATE SLENDER FINGERS ON THE EDGE OF THE FIRE-BOX

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THE OLD COUPLE OF THE HUMBLE HUT

One winter afternoon an old man and an old woman were busy working in their humble hut. The old woman was sewing, sitting by the fire-pit cut in the floor, and the old man was sitting opposite her, weaving a straw coat.

"Maa! Maa!" exclaimed the old woman. "How quickly you work! Just rest a bit, and have a puff of smoke."

She got up and took down his favorite tobacco-case from the wall, and gave him his long pipe and tobacco-pouch. The old man stretched out his legs, and laying aside his work, commenced to smoke.

"Old woman, be glad. I have nearly finished the straw coat. The straw sandals are finished; so is the straw hat."

"Aye, aye," smilingly replied the old woman. "Tomorrow I will take them to the village, and in exchange bring you salted salmon and a little

of your favorite sweet bean paste for a bit-of-a-treat."

"Good it is! Good it is!" the old man chuckled. Then, taking up his unfinished straw coat, he commenced weaving again. They worked even after their evening meal, far into the night.

"It is finished!" exclaimed the old man, giving a last pull to a knot of the straw coat. "Now I will sleep in peace."

Next morning, very early, when the sun had just peeped over the horizon, the old woman got up. Softly she went about preparing herself to go to the village. She put the pan of bean soup over a charcoal fire, and laid the rice-bowl and chopsticks on the tray.

"*Sa!*" she said to herself. "My old man's breakfast is ready, whenever he is up. I will take my leave now."

She wrapped the straw coat in a huge square of cotton cloth and, settling it comfortably on her back, tied the ends of the cloth under her chin. Then she tied the straw sandals in two clusters, and hung them on either side of her sash. Then, stretching back her arm, she placed the

straw hat securely on top of the bundle. That being done, she slipped into her low clogs, and noiselessly opened the wooden sliding door. Chilly air blew in.

"*Maa! Maa!* It looks like the snow is to fall. I will take my umbrella."

With her huge but light bundle over her shoulders, and the straw sandals dangling about her arms, and the umbrella in her hand, the old woman was ready for a busy day.

She walked briskly along the side of the road where on one side stretched the even squares of rice-fields. Soon she reached the village. Then she commenced her usual call.

"Straw hat! Straw hat! Would you not like a straw hat?" Clear and melodious, sounded her call as she wandered through the village.

"Straw sandals! Straw sandals! Would you not like straw sandals?" she continued calling.

It was cold, and the street passers hurried by her. A farmer, with a huge hoe over his shoulder, stopped.

"Old woman, old woman, I will buy a pair of your straw sandals."

"Aye, aye," she said, handing him a pair of her old man's sandals.

Soon she had sold all her old man's sandals except one pair. And though she called out often for the straw coat, nobody seemed to want it, nor the straw hat. And they were the most handsome things to be sold. She did not realize how late it was until she noticed that the sun was setting, and suddenly big white flakes began to fall.

"*Maa! Maa!*" she said aloud, seeing how fast the snow was begining to fall. She opened her oil-paper umbrella, and commenced to walk faster, though her feet were very tired. All the while she did not forget to call out, "Straw coat! Straw coat! Would you not like a straw coat?"

The street became quiet. The passers-by hurried to their homes. The lights began to blink from different snow-covered thatched houses.

Just as she turned a lonely corner, she suddenly came to the stone image of Merciful Buddha. One hand was lifted and held the threatening rod to drive away evil, and the other was outstretched to help the needy.

"*Namu-Amida-Butsu,*" murmured the old

woman, bowing low and rubbing her hands reverently as she looked up again. She was overwhelmed with reverent pity, for the god of mercy was fast being covered with the cold white snow.

She quickly unloosened her bundle and, unwrapping the cloth, took out the straw coat. Then she smoothed it with her wrinkled old hands, and placed the coat about the Buddha's shoulder. She softly murmured her apology of disrespect for clearing off the snow from the god's head with her own humble hand. Then she placed the straw hat upon his head. She looked at the last pair of her old man's sandals, but this, too, she placed before the bare feet of the Merciful Buddha. Then, with a satisfied heart, the old woman hurried homeward.

When she reached her humble hut, the old man was waiting for her with hot tea. Then smiling, he said, "My old woman, so you have sold everything! It was a big work for my old woman on so cold a day. Come, and warm yourself by the glow of the charcoal fire."

The old woman felt very sorry to disappoint

him, but she said, "Old man, old man, I am sorry to tell you, I did something very rash."

"What may that be, my old woman?" asked the surprised old man.

Then she told him how cold the Merciful Buddha looked in the midst of the falling snow, and how rashly, with pity, she had placed the hat, the coat, and the sandals upon the god. When the old woman had finished her story, she looked up into the smiling face of her husband.

"My good wife, that is good. That is good. That is what I would want you to have done."

"But I could not buy your favorite bean-cake," said the old woman, slowly taking out from her sleeve a little package wrapped in the skin of a bamboo. "But I have the salted fish," she said, handing him the little package.

"That is better for such a cold night. Make me hot soup. The rice is ready, and with the salmon we will have a good warm supper."

So the old couple had a simple, pleasant meal. The old man listened as the old woman told him what she had seen in the village street. The old woman was tired, so they retired early.

About three in the early dawn, the old couple were awakened by strange voices far in the distance.

"Wassho! Wassho! Wassho-wassho! Wassho! Wassho!"

The call continued, mingled with strange sounds they could not understand. Louder and louder the calls became, till finally the old couple heard this:

"Wassho! Wassho! Wassho-wassho! Wassho—where is the home of the straw sandal-maker?"

"Do you hear that?" whispered the trembling old woman. "We are the only straw sandal-makers around here."

Still louder came the calls, mingled with panting breaths and sounds of heavy feet.

"Is it here?" came a loud voice.

"Yes, yes. This is the house. This is the house," cried several loud voices.

The old couple crouched, trembling with fear.

Then a deep voice said, "Hurry! Dawn will be here, and the world will be up in no time."

The old couple huddled together, hardly breathing a sound.

"Now let it go!" said the deep voice.

Dotan! Something heavy came down with a great thud on the ground.

Then the couple heard the sound of scrambling and scuffling of heavy feet, which quickly died in the distance again.

For a while the old couple sat motionless. Hearing no more strange sounds, the old man was curious to peep without. So, though he still trembled, the old man went to the entrance and stepped down the shoe-off place, and pushed open the wooden sliding door.

"What is it?" called the old woman from within.

"Come! Come quickly!" cried the old man.

They stood spellbound, looking at the pile of gold coins, silks, and even salted salmon and sweet bean-paste cake, which the old man loved.

"There is some mistake. This cannot be for us!" said the old woman.

Just as she said this, she saw, on a long white paper, a clear black writing which read, "This is for the good old woman who gave comfort to the



"NAMU AMIDA BUTSU," MURMURED THE OLD WOMAN BOWING LOW
AND RUBBING HER HANDS REVERENTLY.

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needy, and in remembrance of her kindness, the god of mercy is sending these treasures."

And so the old couple accepted the treasures with deep reverence, and they lived happily ever after.

THE END

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